ANNUAL POLITICAL BOOK ISSUE

The Washington Monthly

MARCH 1980/$2.00

THE NEW IDEALISM

Try It For 30 Days At Great Personal Risk

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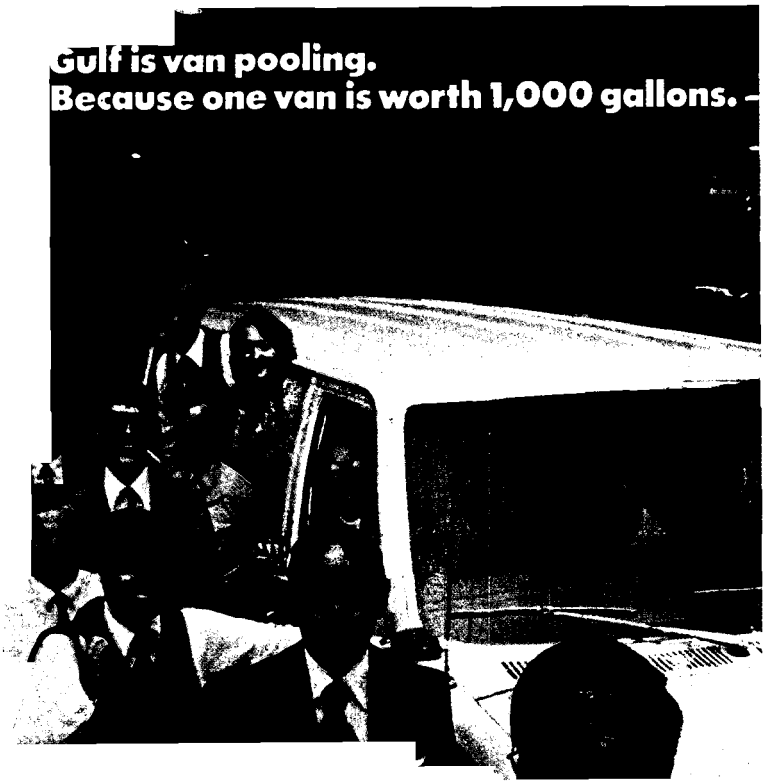
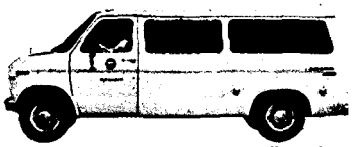
Gulf is van pooling.
Because one van is worth 1,000 gallons.



"Every morning, 1,749 Gulf employees who used to drive their own cars to work now make the trip in vans," says Gulf's van pooling Program Administrator Ken Sawicki. "And the energy savings are really amazing.



"Every van we operate saves 1,000 gallons of gas every 38 working days."

"With 11 people to a van making an average daily round trip of about 50 miles, we figure that each van saves 1,000 gallons of gasoline every 38 working days.

"With 164 vans now operating at fourteen Gulf facilities, we save 4,164 gallons of gasoline every working day! Of course, van pooling isn't the only way Gulf conserves energy. We cut fuel consumption of our tank truck fleet almost 13%, and of our eight refineries by 20%, compared to 1972.

"Energy conservation is a tremendous challenge, but we have to meet it if this country is ever to become less dependent on expensive imported oil in the future. It's only reasonable that Gulf, as one of America's leading energy producers, should work just as hard at being one of America's energy savers.

"We put together a how-to-do-it booklet to make it easier for other companies to start van pooling. I'll be glad to send you a copy if you just write to me, Ken Sawicki, at P.O. Box 2001, Houston, Texas 77001."

Gulf

Gulf people:
energy for tomorrow.

Gulf Oil Corporation

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Letters

Myth of the Successful Woman

Hurrah for Deborah Fallows ["Mothers and Other Strangers," January] who put into such accurate words feelings I have had since my children, ages six and seven and one-half, were born.

My youngest child entered first grade this year. At times I did find (and still do) childrearing tedious, boring, and depressing. Certainly at regular intervals I felt trapped and had the urge to flee. But my concern is now whether I can find in my career something that is as important, as significant and brings me as much gratification as being a mother.

ELEANOR BERGHOLZ
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Pro Maimonides

Peter Engel ["Harvard's Soft Core," January] credits "the Jewish lobby" for the inclusion of a course on Moses Maimonides. To him it is self-evident that the Greek lobby is not needed to explain the inclusion of Plato and Aristotle, the Italian lobby, Dante, and the German lobby, Nietzsche. . . .

JACOB NEUSNER
Providence, Rhode Island

Mr. Neusner is the Ungerleider Distinguished Scholar of Judaic Studies at Brown University.

Second Class Citizens

Congratulations on your piece on red tag and the Postal Service ["Last In, First Out at the Post Office," Walter Jacob, January]. Contrary to popular opinion Lewis Carroll is not dead: he is writing legal briefs for the U.S. Postal Service.

There are a few factual errors in the piece that should be corrected. First, your magazine and the others in the current red tag case are *not* suing the USPS. You (and I) are involved in an administrative procedure, a Mail Classification case, before the Postal Rate Commission. . . .

There is a suit against the USPS, but I am alone in that. Oral arguments were heard before the Court of Appeals in Washington in December, 1979 and we look for a decision in the spring. I firmly believe it was that suit that forced the Rate Commission to consider the current case.

You were in error on the order of the two most important non-weeklies getting red tag. Red tag was initiated in 1924 and *Forbes* magazine was granted the service in 1933. *Fortune* magazine (which is owned by Time, Inc.) went fortnightly from monthly in January 1978. In February 1978 they were granted "red tag" status by special dispensation of the New York postmaster. . . .

SAMUEL PENNINGTON
Waldoboro, Maine

Mr. Pennington is editor of the Maine Antique Digest.

As Chairman of the Postal Rate Commission, I read the article by Walter Jacob with great interest. Since the subject of that article, expedited delivery of second-class mail (red tag treatment) is currently pending before this Commission, I am constrained from commenting upon it at this time.

I do wish to comment upon the second article, "Philanthropy at the First-Class Window: How Your Stamps Help Buy Jacques Cousteau an Asparagus Fork." The article properly points out that the American public subsidizes nonprofit mailers—but does not recognize that this is done through Congressional appropriations from the general Treasury, and definitely *not* from an inflated price for "full rate" postage. . . .The Postal Service is prohibited from carrying mail of any class, including nonprofit mailings, unless it receives the full cost for such mail. As indicated later in the article, should *Congress* not appropriate the difference between the nonprofit rate and the rate the nonprofit mailer would otherwise pay, the Postal Service is to charge the nonprofit mailer the "regular" rate. Thus mailings of authorized nonprofit organizations are being subsidized by an act of Congress through Treasury revenues and not by the rates this Commission recommends be paid by other classes of mail.

A. LEE FRITSCHLER
Washington, D.C.

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Bipartisan praise for a new edition of a classic study of American politics

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—John C. White, Chairman, Democratic National Committee

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—Bill Brock, Chairman, Republican National Committee

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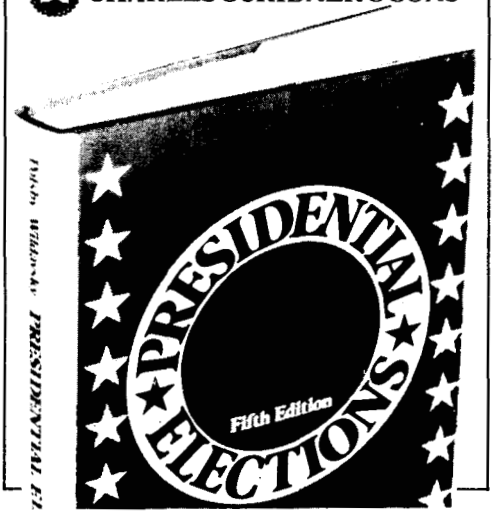

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VOLUME TWELVE NUMBER ONE MARCH 1980

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Tilting at windmills

by Charles Peters

One of our editors has a car with a chronically leaking tire which he has to pump up at least once a week. This has provided the opportunity to make an informal survey of gas stations in several cities. Three out of every four, he finds, don't have a working air pump. Air is harder to get than gas. When he asks for it, service station attendants look at him as though he had just asked for a garland of roses. It so happens that tire pressure is the greatest single factor affecting fuel economy; according to EPA, under-inflated tires can cause a car to use ten- to 25-percent more gas. And almost all cars have under-inflated tires. If we're really interested in saving fuel, we ought to require attendants to check the tires when they fill the tank. Such a law could go into effect immediately, involving no investment capital. Yet, instead, we're spending billions in complicated changes in automotive technology and shoveling more billions overseas. . . .

•

One of Jack Benny's classic lines was when the robber said, "Your money or your life!" and Benny replied: *"Hmmmm."* That captures exactly my dilemma about the Democratic candidates. Kennedy's price controls and gas rationing might protect my money, but his opposition to the draft might endanger my life. . . .Kennedy's inability to explain to Roger Mudd of CBS why he should be president calls to mind this passage from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s biography of RFK:

"The Attorney General [Robert Kennedy] went up to Hyannisport to help prepare Ted for a debate with his opponent. . . Ted wondered how best to explain why he should be in the Senate. . . ."

I have a couple of tips for Kennedy's campaign manager. One: Distribute free copies of Antonia Fraser's *Royal Charles*, which argues that even a tireless womanizer like Charles II could be a great king. Two: Suppress Michael R. Bechloss's *Kennedy and Roosevelt,* which shows Kennedy's father to have been a vicious anti-Semite. . . .

As for the Carter campaign, one of Carter's television commercials in Iowa had the announcer saying:

"You may not always agree with President Carter, but you never find yourself wondering if he's telling you the truth."

Another ad had Carter telling an Iowa farmer:

"Well, nothing's more important to me than being with you."...

•

When Barbara Babcock recently resigned after two-and-a-half years as assistant attorney general in charge of the civil division at Justice, she was asked what she thought had been her major accomplishment. Reorganizing the division, she said—from 14 small sections into three large sections. To bureaucratic insiders, this is as familiar by now as Jack Benny's jokes. New administrations come and go, and nothing changes but the charts. . . .

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Several months ago, when I boldly launched my campaign to bring back the dirigibles, my friends said (among other things): "But no one will want to spend 36 hours getting to London." Well, the trip costs them

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nearly 36 hours out of their lives the way they travel now. They leave Washington at 7:30 p.m., arrive in London at 7:30 a.m. (London time), get into their hotel around 10:30, collapse immediately from jet lag and sleep until around 5 p.m., wake up, eat, fall back into bed, wake up again at 2 a.m. and kick the sheets around until 7:30, when they can begin a reasonably normal day. This is what passes for modern, convenient travel. Why not spend those 36 hours aloft in the spacious, quiet, comfortable cabin of a dirigible, gradually adjusting to the time change?

•

The most important story in *The New York Times* of January 27 was buried on page 22:

"When Albert DuRocher became a teacher 30 years ago, he wanted to spend his time with students, not paperwork. After a dozen years in the classroom, he moved to the principal's office. But the promotion meant that he spent little time with the students he wanted to help.

"'The time had come when I was more worried about filling out federal forms... than I was worried about the kids,' Mr. DuRocher said. Now he has given up 18 years as a principal to move back to teaching. The enthusiastic Mr. DuRocher, in his mid-50s, is now 'Mr. D.,' the object of attention of kindergarten students at Sherman School."

Mr. DuRocher's story is important because it reverses a distressing trend among able public and private elementary and secondary teachers to move into administrative jobs where the pay and prestige are greater but the joy is missing. This is what a bureaucratic society does: It takes its best doers and grinds them into managers, because administration is what bureaucracy values, and doing is what it avoids....

•

Looking for the fundamental fallacy of Marxism? Here it is: Marxism assumes that if government doesn't have to serve the interests of the rich, it will serve the interests of all the people. The truth is that government cares only about perpetuating itself. From time to time it may appear to be serving only the rich, in capitalist countries, or the poor in communist countries—but the bureaucrat's true concern is for himself, and that's why Marxism has succeeded no more than capitalism in solving the central problem of our time: the bureaucratic state.... Time and again the bureaucracy, which can so often seem inept and lethargic, moves like a tiger when its own interests are threatened. Three recent illustrations:

1) It persuaded President Carter's pay advisory commission that the annual in-grade or "step" increases given to 99 per cent of federal employees shouldn't count as pay raises under the inflation guidelines.

2) It persuaded the Merit System Protection Board to invalidate a regulation permitting the firing of government employees for "unacceptable performance."

3) It effectively emasculated another intended result of the Civil Service Reform Act—a study to determine how much of the government could be moved out of Washington—by persuading the Office of Management and Budget to report that only a few thousand jobs could be moved to field locations without undue cost and disruption....

According to Diane Brockett of *The Washington Star,* more than half of the payments in the government's largest aid program to college students have been either too large or too small. For a more sensible way to finance higher education, see the article by Robert M. Kaus in this issue....

•

There's a federal law that says passenger trains can't be sidetracked for freights. Few laws are more flagrantly ignored. But can Amtrak do anything about it? Of course it can. All it has to do is hire Sheriff Larry Pamplin of Falls County, Texas.

It seems, reports the *Texas Monthly*, that while Missouri-Pacific crews take half-hour coffee breaks at a Falls County cafe, their freight trains are left blocking the streets, including the main route to the hospital. Pamplin and railroad officials had engaged in a war of words

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for months, but when the sheriff found his way to the hospital barred one day early this year, he'd had enough. Invoking an old state law prohibiting obstruction of a crossing for more than five minutes, Pamplin arrested the conductor and threw him in the pokey. Missouri-Pacific had to send another conductor to move the train. As a result, Pamplin says, things "have improved considerably."...

•

In December, the government announced plans to require food labels to divulge more information about ingredients. I applaud the effort but wish they would broaden their sphere of concern. There's something else that many of us consume with gusto—and it has no labeling information at all: Yet one hears that most beers are brewed with sodium nitrite—Coors, for one, is not—and that some European wines are filtered through asbestos. The problem here may be that Ralph Nader doesn't drink....

•

My concern about military unpreparedness wasn't exactly eased by this January 1 report from Robert Smith of *The Los Angeles Times*:

"The Air Force's experimental cruise missile is designed to duck below enemy radar and weave 1,000 miles over varied terrain to deliver a nuclear warhead. But last month, one unarmed cruise missile instead weaved into a hillside near Ojai, California, and another veered into a cattle ranch near Lompoc, California. Both had been fired from a B-52 bomber about 400 miles off the California coast.

"Both missiles were supposed to end up at a Utah test site. But three of the five offshore launches have crashed (one dropped in the ocean) and, in all, seven missiles have gone down out of the 16 aircraft-launched tests."...

•

We never expected to see the elegance of language of the Watergate tapes surpassed, but according to a well-informed friend of ours, the FBI's ABSCAM tapes have Rep. Michael Myers saying, "Money talks, bullshit walks."...

•

The Russians are on to us. Here is an excerpt from an article by Aleksei Burmistenko appearing in a recent issue of the Soviet magazine *Zhurnalist*:

"... On the whole, the use of 'leaks' is a dubious journalistic technique—from both a professional and an ethical viewpoint. First of all, 'investigative reporting' rarely turns up anything of social significance. Unfortunately, more typical examples of what this method yields are the 'exposure' of the affair between Congressman Wayne Hays and his secretary Elizabeth Ray (with all the salacious details) and the 'leak' of indecent remarks made by former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz.

"In the second place, in using 'leaks' press organs inevitably place themselves in the humiliating and dependent position of passive conduits for those who organize the 'leaks'—congressmen, politicians, government officials. A reliance on 'leaks' or 'authoritative' sources makes it impossible for Western journalists to evaluate and verify the information they obtain. In most cases, the logic of the bourgeois press calls for the immediate publication of a 'scoop.' Sometimes a publication receives a Pulitzer Prize for such a story, but usually this approach results in the tendentious coverage of events and divorces the press from responsibility for the authenticity or consequences of its 'revelations.'

"The result is a vast number of 'overblown' sensations, false 'leaks,' and 'facts' taken out of context. For instance, if one glances back through the 'Periscope' and 'Washington Whispers' sections of *Newsweek* and *US News & World Report* over the past few years, it is amazing how many absurdities, mistaken forecasts and unconfirmed 'facts' one finds...."

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If you think the kind of businessmen who exploited child labor went out with Dickens, you're wrong. They've simply switched from children to the handicapped. *The Wall Street Journal*'s Jerry Landauer (surely one of the

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Chermayeff & Geismar

"For God's sake, let us freely hear both sides."

Thomas Jefferson

Diversity of opinion is universal. But only in a democracy are divergent ideas welcomed, not feared. Since the beginning of our nation, debate has always been an essential part of American life.

In those early years, town meetings guaranteed citizens an opportunity to speak out, to differ and to reconcile their differences. Certainly, the vital issues facing America have changed. But now, more than ever, people need to express their views and to have access to the decision makers.

Since 1974 National Town Meeting, presented by Mobil, has met those needs by providing citizens with a forum for an open dialogue of today's crucial concerns.

The format is simple: two or three principal speakers have their say on a selected subject, and then the audience is invited to ask questions. At meetings over the past six years, citizens have queried such guests as Senators Barry Goldwater and George McGovern, Andrew Young, Masters and Johnson, Barbara Tuchman, Eric Sevareid and James J. Kilpatrick.

This year's meetings are scheduled for Thursdays at the John F. Kennedy Center beginning March 6 at 10:30 a.m. The first four programs (listed to the right) are co-sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association.

Future topics and speakers will include: "The Seas: Scientific and Political Prospects" with Jacques Cousteau, "Political Humor" with Art Buchwald and "Culture in Washington: The New Mecca?" with Mstislav Rostropovitch.

Question the people who make the news—come to National Town Meeting. It's lively. It's informative. And, it's free.

Question the people who make the news.

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Schedule for March

March 6

The World in 1980: America's Basic Options

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Moderator: Winston Lord, President, Council on Foreign Relations

March 13

The U.S. and the Islamic World

H. E. Sultan Muhammad Khan, the Ambassador of Pakistan
Hon. Hermann Eilts, Professor of International Relations, Boston University, former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Charles P. Issawi, Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University

Moderator: Donald Oberdorfer, *Washington Post*

March 20

The United Nations at 35: Illusions and Realities

Hon. Donald F. McHenry, U.S. Representative to the United Nations
Hon. Arthur J. Goldberg, former U.S. Representative to the United Nations

Moderator: Patrick J. Buchanan, syndicated columnist
(remainder of panel to be announced)

March 27

U.S. Vital Interests: What Are They Really?

Senator Abraham Ribicoff (D.—Conn.)
Hon. Richard Helms, former U.S. Ambassador and former Director, CIA

Moderator: Karen Elliott House, *Wall Street Journal*

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best reporters around) and his colleague, Jonathan Kwitny, took a look at what employers of the handicapped have been getting away with and found a pattern of wages as low as 10 cents per hour.

Even when wages are decent, they are accompanied by some incredible production quotas: "Last winter," Landauer and Kwitny reported, "blind workers struck California Industries for the Blind, of Monterey Park, forcing administrators to finish a job for a private defense contractor. While handicapped workers had to assemble 120 bomb parts an hour to earn $2.90, sources say, the fastest administrator, an accountant, could assemble only 75."

This story brings us to the fallacy of capitalism, which is that profits can always be maximized with due regard to the quality of the product and the welfare of the worker. Only a monopoly can do that, and then consumers are victimized by unfair prices. It is possible for the entrepreneur who owns all of his company's stock to put product quality, worker welwelfare—and fair prices—above profit, but only until the red ink is reached. Where there are other stockholders, he is under a legal duty to maximize profit in their behalf. Sometimes, particularly in very large corporations, where ownership is diffused, the executives and the union will get away with running things as much for their own benefit as for the stockholders, but even then reasonable diligence must be exercised to keep the price of the stock from going down. Only rarely, as has been the case with this magazine, a small group of benign stockholders will permit a company to be run without regard to profit. But this usually happens only with small enterprises that are not important sources of income for their investors.

On the whole, then, profits must be maximized, and to hell with everything else. Unless, of course, there are laws requiring that everything else (or at least some of it) be taken into account. This is why the New Deal legislation to protect workers was so important. And this is why no one should ridicule efforts to force management to provide a safe and healthy workplace. . . . And this is also why you should be for a windfall-profits tax on the oil companies.

What do they do when they get a windfall profit? Look at the record. When the first great OPEC price increase occurred in 1973-1974, the oil companies could have held consumer prices down by valuing the oil they had on hand at the lower cost at which it had been purchased and pricing its gasoline accordingly. Instead, they charged the customer as if the gas they were selling him had been purchased at the new OPEC rates instead of the old. Again, in 1979—and even with a windfall-profits tax staring them in the face and a last chance to demonstrate corporate good citizenship—they valued Arabian oil, which the Saudis were selling at below OPEC prices because they did not want to exacerbate world inflation, at the highest OPEC levels and charged you with the highest price.

So support a tough windfall-profits tax. Or support gasoline rationing that is tough enough to drive down the price of oil. And then see how many more of those pious injunctions to conserve you get from the oil companies.

•

Our rim-riding editor, Gregg Easterbrook, recently rented a car in Cincinnati. He asked for a compact. The clerk said, "Of course," and gave him the keys—to a Firebird Trans-Am 6.6 with a 400-cubic-inch 220-horsepower V-8 engine, quad-flared tailpipes, hood scoop, spoiler, mag wheels, and a T-bar roof. It flew like a rocket, he reports, but got only 11 miles per gallon.

Here we have an insight into the fascinating nomenclature of the rental-car industry. "Compact" means "Firebird." And "standard" may mean a giant top-of-the-line LTD with every accessory known to man—but the rental receipt will simply say "Ford." That way the bookkeepers back at the home office never have to confront the profligacy of their expense-account executives.

Richard Reeves's column on political books will not appear regularly while he is covering the presidential campaign.

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SHEEPSKINS are for SHEEP

Credentials look great on the wall, but they don't get the job done.

by James Fallows

A few months ago, I wrote an article for the *Atlantic* about the deficiencies of standardized aptitude tests such as the "College Boards." I had been planning for some time to write a complementary article for this magazine about the importance of assessing actual competence rather than aptitude, when one of the letters the *Atlantic* received about my article caught my eye. It came from a man in Rockville Centre, New York, and its gist was this:

"I thought we were barely emerging from the murk of the egalitarian seventies, that we were beginning to recognize its consequences: college students who can't read, cashiers who can't add, telephone operators who can't speak. So here is an article saying just the wrong things at the wrong time." I quote the letter here because it perfectly sums up the attitude I want to rebut. This man is saying, in effect, that if you are concerned about the people who can't read and add and speak, you have to blindly cling to standards like the College Boards or the IQ tests—*even though every bit of evidence* shows they have at best a fuzzy connection to the skills you are looking for, and even though you know that, in so doing, you guarantee that the children of people who are down and out in this generation will be down and out too, for no better reason than the circumstances of their birth and rearing.

My purpose in this article will be to argue, as plainly as possible, the alternate case. *Precisely because* of the failures that man mentioned—and the ones he chose to omit, the public school teachers who watch the clock, the auto makers who scratch their heads in wonder as the domestic market is taken over by foreign cars—we cannot be content with a system that measures people's ability according to the educational credentials they have collected over the years. If we want people who can read, add, and speak—and repair cars, perform surgery, lead men in combat—we must start measuring *performance,* rather than credentials, knowing as we do that in

James Fallows is the Washington editor of the Atlantic *and a contributing editor of* The Washington Monthly.

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this, and *only* this way will we see anything like the reward-according-to-competence that has long been the center of our "meritocratic" creed.

The Right Stuff?

Today, the premise of our meritocracy is that the schools will select those with the greatest ability, hone their minds and equip them with further skills, and grant them degrees as proof of their superior performance. Those with the right stuff get ahead. Those without it end up on the bottom of the job pyramid. This may frustrate the "egalitarians," but it is the price we pay for putting the right people in the right jobs.

The great virtue of two new books—*The Credential Society*, by Randall Collins (Academic Press), and *The Regulation of Psychotherapists,* by Daniel B. Hogan (Ballinger)—is that they look behind the smug certainty of this creed to examine the real relation between education, credentials, and performance on the job. Together they blow the man from Rockville Centre out of the water, for they show that a *real* concern for performance is more profoundly egalitarian than the sham performance standards we accept today.

The books' approaches are quite different: Collins, a sociologist from the University of Virginia, has worked up an abstract theoretical view of the stratification of the American economy. Hogan, a lawyer and social psychologist at Harvard, has filled four volumes with an exhaustively detailed look at aspects of competence and regulation in just one profession. Yet the same questions seem to lie at the bottom of both books—whether *success* by the rules of the educational meritocracy guarantees the ability to perform, and whether the corresponding "failures" arise from individual defect. The answer both authors suggest is no.

Collins works from the premise of bias in the meritocratic selection system—that is, that the janitor's son, no matter what his theoretical "ability," will have less chance to display it than the manager's son. When the principle is stated this way, no sane man can deny it—but most would go on to argue that, like sin and sickness, it is an inevitable fact of life. Most people sense that even if such a system is cruel or "unfair," it still turns out the people best qualified to do the job. It is this part of the equation that Collins and Hogan challenge; in addition to being unfair, they say, the system is not even efficient.

The meat of Collins' evidence is a number of studies showing that the training required for professional positions is more important as a means of monopolizing income and protecting status than as a way of developing important occupational skills. He shows that, over the last half century, the degree requirements for almost every sort of job have dramatically increased. These days, managers must have master's degrees, and clerks must have BAs. Almost none of this credential inflation, he says, is due to any increase in the sophistication of the jobs themselves; most practical job skills, he shows in a number of studies, are still learned on the job. Rather, the degree requirements are a rationing mechanism for the positions of economic and social influence. As long as firms require all managers to have advanced degrees, no one who enters the firm as a file clerk or secretary has much chance of moving up. "Secretaries," he says, "are in a perfect situation for on-the-job learning of managerial skills. At present, . . . virtually no secretary is ever promoted to take her boss's position. Nevertheless, this is not only technically feasible, but once was the standard promotion line, before the late 19th century, when secretaries were males operating as apprentices for later administrative responsibility." In English and American novels of manners of the 18th and 19th centuries, some eager young striver is always hoping to make his way in the world by signing on as secretary to a Great Man. That line of promotion ran from David Copperfield to Billy Rose, who got his introduction to the world of finance and show business after starting as secretary to Bernard Baruch.

That line has ended now. These days, Baruch would take Billy Rose aside and tell him that he really ought to go back to school to get his MBA, and Horatio Alger's heroes would have been discouraged from applying to a four-year college because of disappointing IQ scores in the early years. Their places would be taken by those with the proper complement of grades and degrees. These years of education may well give today's boss fodder for

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When you place the emphasis on *performance*, the other worries take care of themselves. Who ever fretted about imposing an 'affirmative action' plan on the NFL?

more varied use of leisure time and a richer life of the mind, but—according to Randall Collins—they will not necessarily have made him better qualified to do the job. Collins cites some of the abundant academic evidence on this point—the report presented to the American Association of Medical Colleges in 1963 showing that those who do well in medical schools are not necessarily good doctors, Ivar Berg's demonstration in 1970 that in most technical industries, engineers and research scientists with less education did better than their counterparts with more—but the most vivid illustrations are embedded in the detail of Daniel Hogan's book.

High-Input Workers

Hogan's ambition is to open up the profession of psychotherapy, at every level from psychoanalyst to encounter group leader to social worker, and see what makes it tick. The first half of his first volume (the other three volumes are mainly reference books) details exactly what traits and qualities distinguish an effective psychotherapist from an ineffective one. The standard for "effectiveness" is *output*—that is, changes in the patient's condition—rather than *input*, such as how much effort the therapist applies, how much he charges, how much training he's had. In the second part of the book, with the same painstaking thoroughness, Hogan goes through the qualities demanded of those who want to be psychotherapists—who gets into the professional schools, what traits are encouraged there, what skills are required to pass the licensing tests.

"Contrary to much professional opinion," Hogan says, "the effectiveness of therapists is more determined by the presence or absence of certain personality characteristics and interpersonal skills than technical abilities and theoretical knowledge." The skills of the psychotherapists, as Hogan describes them, are mainly common-sense human skills—traits like warmth, empathy, reliability, a lack of pretentiousness or defensiveness, a sensitivity to human subtlety, an ability to draw people out. "The necessary qualities are very similar to those one looks for in a good friend." These are not traits that can be quantified and detected on a multiple-choice exam, but they are real, and can be measured in creative ways. When people possess them, Hogan says, they can generally be effective therapists—whether or not they've had much detailed "professional" training. Hogan concludes, from his survey of the research, that in half of all "effectiveness" studies, non-professional therapists did *better* than professionals in helping patients improve, "despite their lack of education and despite their lack of knowledge in the field of personality dynamics."

Hogan's book is filled with studies documenting this point. In one study conducted in 1965, five laymen—only *one* of them with a college degree—received less than 100 hours training in therapy skills. Then they were put in charge of therapy groups made up of people who had been hospitalized, on the average, for more than *13 years*. Under their treatment, more than half of the patients improved. Ten

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years earlier, in a study of the ability to judge people, R. Taft "concluded that physical scientists, other non-psychologists [such as personnel workers], and beginning psychology graduate students were as good or better at judging people as experienced clinical psychologists." In an article called "On Being Sane in Insane Places," published in 1973, D. Rosenhan described eight perfectly healthy "pseudopatients," who voluntarily sought admission to hospital mental wards. They were instructed to answer all questions truthfully, except for name and employment, and to invent one "presenting symptom." Once admitted to the psychiatric ward, the pseudopatients stopped faking any symptoms and behaved as they would in normal life.

"What happened to these normal individuals was extraordinary," Hogan says. "All of them were hospitalized with the diagnosis of schizophrenia, except for one person who was diagnosed as a manic-depressive psychotic. The total length of hospitalization varied from seven to 52 days, with an average of 19. During the pseudopatients' entire hospital stay, none of the psychiatrists, nurses, or other professionals suspected that these people might be normal. Interestingly, the ward patients were quite suspicious, with 35 of a total of 118 patients voicing their doubts about the first three admittees alone." Now, this case may be extreme. Presumably some psychiatrist, somewhere, can tell a normal person from a nut. But it at least plants the seed of wonder: are there some judgments that non-professionals (let alone hospitalized mental patients) can make quite as skillfully as those with full pedigree and certification?

The Hardest Question

As against the common-sense qualities that lead to therapeutic success, Hogan lists the traits the profession considers crucial for licensing and training. By and large, they are detailed, technical skills demanding many years of preparation. "For traditional psychotherapy," Hogan says, "psychiatrists stress an understanding of human biology, neurology, and psychopharmacology; psychologists stress personality dynamics and interpersonal behavior; and social workers believe that a theoretical understanding of environmental influences on behavior is essential. . . . In addition, each school of therapy usually insists that its adherents possess a thorough grounding in the particular theory espoused by that school."

Indeed, some of these skills may be crucial in some cases. Before turning a disturbed patient over to a warm, empathetic non-professional, one would want to be sure his complaints did not arise from chemical imbalance, from injury, or from a tumor. Specialists in neurology and psychopharmacology could make judgments in those areas that non-specialists could not. But once the possibility of those disorders has been eliminated, technical knowledge apparently counts for *nothing* in restoring most mental patients to health. If technical qualification is taken as a proxy for effectiveness as a therapist, and if only those who can stay in school for years and years can collect professional fees for their skills, have not the rules of the meritocracy gone awry? Are we not, as Hogan and Collins suggest, rewarding credentials rather than competence? Shouldn't we be licensing people for specific demonstrated competence, rather than for entry into a broad professional class? Can we claim that the meritocracy is interested in either justice or merit, when its standards diverge so far from those of real performance?

For most of us, this is the hardest question about the meritocracy, for it upsets the emotional and intellectual premises on which the entire system is based. As long as we accept the rough justice of the standards of selection, we can abide the inevitable cruelty of the results, as rookies on a football team acknowledge the reality that some of them will be cut. Despite evidence like Hogan's, people still believe on some unspoken level that there is reason in the results. They may concede, as a debating point, that there is a difference between doing well on the Law School Admissions Test and being a good lawyer, but they feel something else in their bones. They recognize, as a mature, adult reality, that whatever may be wrong with these standards, they still produce the people you are looking for. This faith was perhaps put best by a test designer at the Educational Testing Service. Yes, he said, the skills measured by the tests might be

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somewhat arbitrary; yes, they largely measured exposure to literate, upper-middle-class culture during the children's formative years. And yes, again, they tended to follow lines of economic privilege, replicating in one generation's educational achievements the advantages and comforts of the generation before. It certainly is a pity that so many children never really have a chance to perform on the tests because of the disadvantages of their upbringing. "But in general," he said, "the kids who know these things know a lot else. A *lot.*" He reflected the general faith that, if the measures are imprecise, they are still effective, and that those who run the gauntlet deserve the prize.

Shaking The Faith

"That assumption is simply wrong," says Paul Pottinger of the National Center for the Study of the Professions, a group that has concentrated on the connection between competence and credentials. "I've never seen any evidence anywhere that those who do well academically do well in life—except for getting the credential that enables them to hold a professional position. Some of the most effective human service workers, for example, are middle-aged black ladies who are paid practically nothing for their case work, while some supervisor with an advanced degree and a license earns twice as much and tells them what to do, even though she couldn't come close to them in daily work." This is only one piece of the evidence that Pottinger and others have collected to shake one's faith that credentials separate those who can perform from those who can't.

• David McClelland is a psychologist at Harvard, whose article, "Testing for Competence Rather than Intelligence," published seven years ago, has become a work of gospel for many who challenge the credential system. McClelland's own consulting firm, called McBer, has concentrated on developing ways to measure abilities that elude the grasp of most multiple-choice tests.

One of his projects concerned the foreign service, which has traditionally weeded out prospective diplomatic officers on the basis of the foreign service entry exam. This is an academic-proficiency test, designed by the Educational Testing Service and similar to such other ETS products as the Scholastic Aptitude Test and the Graduate Record Exam—but it is harder, and more laden with questions of factual historical knowledge. The test might well predict grade performance in graduate courses in history or international relations, but the State Department discovered that it did not reveal which of its candidates was likely to perform well in the foreign service.

At the State Department's request, McClelland and his associates tried to find out exactly what qualities *did* make for success in the foreign service. They canvassed widely within the department to find out which diplomats were most generally admired and then analyzed what made those people different from the rest. "You don't just ask them their opinion about what it takes to do a good job," McClelland says, "they may not know, or may just have general ideas. Instead, you ask them to describe in minute detail actual episodes of how they function on the job."

For the foreign service, the traits revealed this way included things like public speaking ability, negotiating skill, a sense of "power networks," and what McClelland calls "leadership skills, things like personal presence. These things sound indefinable, but you know them when you see them. Then there are intellectual competencies, which you measure with tests that are entirely different from normal IQ tests. You don't use the multiple-choice format, but tests of 'thematic analysis,' where you give them a set of materials and ask them to conceptualize it, which is exactly what a political officer is supposed to do. Then you can judge the accuracy and insight of their conceptualization." Indeed, rejection of the multiple-choice format is the basic premise for all these tests, since any multiple-choice question measures how well a person can select among alternatives *someone else* has selected, rather than assessing the very different kinds of intelligence needed to choose a set of alternatives yourself, or to come up with the unconventional approach or answer that most people would overlook. McClelland's tests include simulated interviews, essay questions, subjective measurements of how the candidate "handles" a situation—and in general, they strive to make

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the test conditions resemble their real life correlates as closely as possible. The irony is that, despite all McClelland's hopes that these new "competence" measures could help the foreign service choose and train its members, the foreign service associations grew wary of the whole idea and eventually let it die.

• Ten years ago, in a book called *Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery,* Ivar Berg reported on a study conducted at the Federal Aviation Administration to measure competence among the 507 top-ranking air traffic controllers. The question was whether advanced educational requirements would produce more competent controllers, and the answer was no. "This complicated job," Berg said, "might well require, not merely the details of engineering or management science or mathematics, but also all the supposed 'correlates' of education—a disciplined mind, for example—and the more personal qualities that education is supposed to produce—reliability, steadfastness, responsibility, ability to think quickly, motivation, etc." Yet in total violation of these expectations, the heart of the meritocratic creed, *half* of these top-rank controllers had no formal education beyond high school, having received instead rigorous technical training from the FAA. "Because it was 'stuck with' less educated men," Berg says, "... the FAA became a little laboratory in which the relevance of education for attainment of, and achievement in, important managerial and technical positions could be examined. Education proves not to be a factor in the daily performance of one of the most demanding decision-making jobs in America."

• When it comes to hiring teachers, there are two qualities that count. One is thorough knowledge of a subject area—English, biology—and the other is the desire and ability to stand before a class and *teach.* When teachers are hired for public schools, neither of them matters; what counts is a third quality, the possession of a degree from a teachers college and the subsequent state certification. Private schools, freed of the need to hire certified teachers, can look for candidates with the first two qualities, which helps explain why private schools tend to be better than most public schools. On most private school faculties, you will find a few veterans of the public school system, a few others who have taken education courses—but a majority of teachers who have studied a subject like French or history, never bothered with education training, and have proven in practice that they know how to teach. Most public schools are under the domination of the credentialing industry (the teachers colleges) and a union that resists to the death on-the-job evaluations of real teaching skill. In an excellent *Texas Monthly* article, "Why Teachers Can't Teach," Gene Lyons examined the effects of this creed: Teachers' training is heavy on flannel-board use and theories of constructive playtime and light on content; it labels "unqualified" some who prove to be the most effective teachers, and produces tired, tenured civil servants who waste their and their students' time.

• In the peacetime military, promotion generally depends on getting along with your superior and advancing the peacetime interests of your service—which, in turn, generally means promoting its mission and increasing its budget. Rare men—Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley—combine peacetime skills with wartime effectiveness. The Ulysses S. Grants are failures in the peacetime military, their talents revealed only by the merciless demands of war. James Webb, an Annapolis graduate and veteran of combat in Vietnam, recently pointed out in the *Washingtonian* magazine that the desire to make the military a laboratory for social uplift has widened the gap between promotion and performance. As the military has been judged more and more on its adherence to political goals—equal opportunities for women, civil liberties for enlisted men—and less on its readiness for combat, it has shied from harsh, realistic judgments of leadership skills. Webb says that, in his years at Annapolis, judgments of a midshipman's "leadership" were based on repeated observations, necessarily subjective, of how he dealt with his colleagues, how he adjusted to different environments, how he bore up under prolonged physical and mental stress. Now midshipmen, male and female, are evaluated as "leaders" according to their grades in a class on leadership skills.

• Professions like law and medicine embrace specialties demanding widely dif-

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Visit the typical prep school and you'll see the brain-world's equivalents of Bruce Jenner. What you won't find are the Kent Tekulves.

ferent skills. There is as much difference between the talents of the tax lawyer and the trial lawyer as between those of an internist and an orthopedist. Yet once a lawyer passes the bar, he is allowed to practice any kind of law he chooses, while someone with the manual talents for microsurgery cannot hope to enter that profession unless he has spent the years of college and medical school learning essentially the same things as the future psychiatrist.

The Revolutionary NFL

What these examples suggest, especially those involving law and medicine, is a system more attentive to the demands of preserving status than enlivened by the desire to measure competence in specific tasks. True, the medical societies (unlike the lawyers) have rules of their own to reduce the odds that the ophthalmologist will palpate your prostate—although their assumption is still that anyone with an MD can handle anything in a pinch. But there is nothing in the regulation of medicine comparable to the federal requirement that every airline pilot demonstrate his ability on every single type of aircraft he wants to fly. Nor is there anything resembling the National Football League's practice of open tryouts, where the occasional offbeat character (who usually shows up in headlines with nicknames like "The Place-Kicking Bartender") can demonstrate his ability to catch the pass or kick the ball and win a spot on the team, even though he has not come through the normal channels of big-college ball like everyone else.

In responsible quarters, the sporting comparison will no doubt be laughed off as frivolous. But it is truly a shame that we don't have some kind of professionals' pentathlon or rookie-week tryouts and cuts for lawyers, because sports, for all its do-or-die excesses, is the single area of American life in which *performance* matters more than anything else. The only fields that even come close are show business and politics—all of them asking, "What can you do today," rather than "How did you look 20 years ago?" Sports is also the arena of success with the most dramatic evidence of "social mobility"; you cannot draw a chart connecting success in professional sports with advantages of upbringing, except, perhaps, in pro basketball, the "advantage" of growing up in a big city slum. *This is not a coincidence.* When you place the emphasis on performance, the other worries take care of themselves. Who has ever fretted about imposing an "affirmative action" recruiting program on the NFL?

Sports also teaches the lesson that abilities are separable. Except in the decathlon, people aren't selected for "general athletic ability," like the "general academic ability" that is measured in most standardized tests. They are chosen instead for their specific ability to run, throw, jump, hit, kick. If athletes were chosen for "general ability," they would all have the physique of Bruce Jenner. But a team's best pitcher may be, like Kent Tekulve, a walking stick.

Consider the difference in the profes-

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sional meritocracy. Visit the typical prep school, and you will mainly see the brain-world's equivalents of Bruce Jenner—corn-fed, nicely bulked out from early age—rather than the Kent Tekulves. As Jenner is in his field, they are judged for "general" promise, rather than narrower, more specific skills. Even those who make such judgments—the admissions officers, teachers, and test-makers—surely know from their experience that adult intelligence shows itself in a variety of different ways. There is the ability to plan; the ability to analyze rapidly a fixed set of alternatives; the ability to see the alternative that is not set before you; the ability to read others' thoughts and motives; the ability to criticize; the ability to create; the ability to supervise—to name just a few of perhaps a thousand. Once people have entered a field of work, everyone within the field recognizes the differences these separate talents make. Yet we pretend that they're unimportant—or that they are adequately approximated by a score on the Law School Admissions Test—when it comes time to certify people for entry into different professions.

Why Must We Predict?

Already I can hear the voice from Rockville Centre. All you're asking for, he says, is better predictive tests. How about a trial-lawyer aptitude test for students in the seventh grade, and an ability-to-plan predictor to refine the tracking system in the elementary schools? Well, to an extent that's so, but not in the way the current meritocrats assume. They think that prediction is essential to guard against the horror of admitting someone to law school who might not prove to be up to the work.

The *real* need for prediction is in those fields—of which completing law school is not one—where the costs of incompetence are irreversible and grave. Air traffic controllers, for example: you can't wait to see by trial and error whether they've grasped the principle of keeping airplanes a safe distance apart. Or ambulance technicians, who must demonstrate before they go on the job that they know the difference between a tourniquet placed on the leg and one placed on the neck. According to "Pro-Forum," a publication of the National Center for the Study of the Professions, a new program called the National Registry for Emergency Medical Technicians "has developed one of of the most detailed, thorough, and job-related skill examinations of all certifying agencies." Prospective candidates need not prove they've spent years in college, but they must show they can handle simulated emergencies at eight different examination stations. "Examination conditions are made as realistic as possible," Pro-Forum says. "At one station, for example, candidates are given two-and-a-half minutes to treat a 60-year-old male bar fight victim who has been stabbed in the abdomen. The 'patient' is instructed to appear combative and to have difficulty breathing. The make-up person simulates facial abrasions, a protruding knife, and chest wound."

There are also cases where a sensible look at past performance helps predict those who will have the competence you are looking for. Success in moot court competitions generally indicates people with the trial lawyer's on-the-feet speaking skill. The school paper, the science fair, the debate squad, the football team—all give people an opportunity to demonstrate their competence in realistic tests, outside the normal, narrow limits of academic measures.

But in most cases, what we need is not more prediction, but more determination to measure performance at each step in life, and to give those who have demonstrated mastery of one step the opportunity to move to the next. This requires, for one thing, separating the *academic* functions of education from its role in preparing people for occupational skills (as Robert Kaus discusses at greater length on page 50). Let's let the best scholars get the best academic training; but for as many other professions as possible, let's overturn the idea of creating credentialed cadres at an early age, and base advancement on the principle of demonstrated competence.

For specifics, an example from medicine: in theory, there is no reason nurses should not be able to learn, from their experience on the job, triage-style diagnostic skills and forms of minor surgery that do not depend on the broad medical knowledge that now comes with an MD degree. Still speaking theoretically, the nurses should be able to prove, by passing rigorous, realistic observations, that they

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have mastered those skills—and then be free to perform them, collecting a commensurate financial reward. Some nurses who had moved this far might also feel the drive to fill in the missing parts in their general medical knowledge; they should be able to take a year or two off for academic training—even though they did not finish college or score well on the Medical College Admission Test the first time through—and thereby show, by performance testing, that they were ready to take another step toward the top. Not all of them would want to do it, nor would all be able. But *some* would, and as things are now arranged, they have no chance in the world of building their way up. Randall Collins' prescription follows the same general lines: "All medical careers would begin with a position as orderly, which would be transformed into the first stage of a possible apprenticeship for physicians. After a given number of years, successful candidates could leave for a few years of medical school (two years seems sufficient background for most practitioners, and this could be done equally well at an undergraduate or postgraduate level. . .), and then return to the hospital for advanced apprenticeship training of the sort now given in internship and residency programs. . . . Advanced specialties would be taught as they now are—through further on-the-job training; only medical researchers would be involved in lengthy schooling."

Scrap the Annapolises

Or consider the service academies, which in their current conception represent exactly the pattern we need to change. The goal of West Point and Annapolis is essentially like that of the medical schools: to pick out a group of people at the start of their careers and prepare them for the influential positions they will presumably hold. The cadets and midshipmen are taught discipline, courage, patriotism, the sense of being part of an elite—and then are sent out to lead an army, 99.9 per cent of whose members know that their chances to compete for positions of leadership ended when they did not go to the Point. The enlisted man may work himself all the way up to first sergeant or chief petty officer, but barring a miracle that's as far as he's going.

Why not base the whole progression, from private up to general, on demonstrated ability at each step? I would like to see West Point and Annapolis totally scrapped in their current incarnations, and re-conceived as places where military men and women would go when they needed and were ready for such academic training—whether that was en route to becoming sergeant or en route to general. This does not mean turning the brigades over to the privates. It does mean that everyone interested in a military career would start as an enlisted man and would move up step by step by proving competence at each stage. The first test would be competence as a squad leader—and those who did well at that could keep moving up. When each candidate was ready for a period of broader education, which might be a different time in each candidate's career, he could go to the academies for a year or two of academic training—and then back to the ranks for more steps up the sequence of demonstrated skill. At a time when the military's greatest worry is the defection of its career enlisted men, might this not attract those who would welcome a chance to become commanders or colonels themselves, rather than having the Commander walk through the boiler room, slap them on the back, and say "We couldn't do it without you, Chief"? Perhaps it might even instill in the entire military some of the "elan" and "esprit" officers now find so sadly lacking among men who were not with them at the Point.

I turn again to the letter from Rockville Centre, its tone in harmony with the sentiments sounded from *Commentary* magazine to the writings of Ben Wattenberg. To question any institution is to "knock America," they tell us—more, it is an assault on standards, on legitimate distinctions of quality, on rationality itself. Will it ever be possible for them to see that the higher loyalty to standards and to quality lies in abandoning credentials and embracing competence? That the true revolution of equality could come from the very same step? Perhaps they will respond to a metaphor that, if non-intellectual, is pro-American to the core: Why should the benefits of real performance standards be confined to the NFL? ■

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Next month, Gail Sheehy on: Does she care about clothing and shelter?

The February "new *Ms.*" magazine, attempting to replace politics with broad-appeal "service" features, is all about food. There's a tomato on the cover.

Inside there is a special message to advertisers: "This month the new *Ms.* reveals, today's modern, upwardly mobile woman really does care about food."

They wanted a cargo version of the B-1 bomber, but it kept dropping tanks on San Antonio

Through the 1970s, the Pentagon spent $240 million to develop a tactical cargo plane. Among its key missions would be to carry the Army's new XM-1 battle tank.

After two prototypes, the YC-14 and YC-15, were flown, complications set in. Among them, the XM-1 grew several feet wider and tons heavier than planned. The planes couldn't lift it. So the YC project has been "iced," an Air Force spokesman told *The Washington Monthly*.

Instead, there is another federally funded competition on, to build a "C-X" long-range transport. Only one plane in existence has performance similar to what the Pentagon wants. Its flying record is somewhat spotty, and it had a few cost-control problems, but, insiders say, this does not prevent it from being the leading contender for the C-X contract. The lucky plane? Remember the C-5A Galaxy?

Tidbits & Outrages

Look, Mr. Spock, life-form readings on the inbound red line!

Washington's federally funded Metro subway system may soon junk its $54-million automated fare system.

Metro's computerized fare-card machines and collection gates were supposed to eliminate station labor costs. This bold technological breakthrough, however, fails so often that most stations have two or three full-time workers whose job is to watch the machines. Maintenance on the machines is costing taxpayers $7 million a year.

What second-generation advances will replace the machines? Richard Page, Jr., Metro's general manager, says he is considering buckets, turnstiles, and "humans in booths."

She wasn't busy because the tapes had already been erased.

Last summer Esther Bauer, a reporter for the *Kansas City Times*, got a job as a secretary in the local Department of Health, Education and Welfare office. She wanted to find out what government secretaries really do all day. Her diary shows a typical day went like this:

8 a.m.—Came to work in the Federal Building, read newspaper and book for two hours.

10 a.m.—Typed envelope address.

10:12 a.m.—Photocopied report.

10:26 a.m.—Mailed two letters.

10:48 a.m.—Placed phone call to Vermont for boss.

11:22 a.m.—Typed revised job description.

11:30 a.m.—Went to lunch.

Noon—Returned from lunch and transferred phone call; read because of nothing to do.

2:15 p.m.—Typed travel voucher.

2:25 p.m.—Passed out mail to four bureaucrats.

2:50 p.m.—Passed out more mail to four more bureaucrats, then read because of nothing to do.

4:30 p.m.—Went home.

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Presidential Commissioners Air Their Views

Two members of the Presidential Commission on World Hunger, rock stars John Denver and Harry Chapin, were in town recently for the presentation of the commission's first report. *The Washington Post* overheard this exchange between the commissioners:

Denver: "I do have faith, and I know I have a purpose in life. . ."

Chapin: "It doesn't matter what your motivation is. It doesn't matter if it's liberal guilt."

Denver: "I have no guilt."

Chapin: "I have guilt. Liberal guilt."

Denver: "The word is not in my vocabulary."

STRIVE ALWAYS TO SHOW ALACRITY IN SUMMONING ASSISTANCE

In January, we told you about the verbose T-shirts of the Justice Department's gym, which calls itself an Occupational Health and Physical Fitness Program Facility.

On the wall next to the phone at the OHPFPF, there is a list of instructions explaining what to do if someone has a heart attack or drops a barbell on himself. The list has nine steps. The first is to call 911 and "Say these words: 'There has been a life-endangering emergency at the Department of Justice exercise facility.' "

Those who forget ancient history are condemned to reelect it

Just after the Iowa primary debates—where George Bush had answered Mary McGrory's question "Is there anything in your public career that you regret?" by saying "Well, I'm sure everybody is fallible. . . ." —Bush was interviewed by Robert Scheer of the *Los Angeles Times*. It went like this:

Scheer: One of the questions that was asked at the Iowa debate was, was there anything politically that you would take back, and I thought the answers were quite weak. . . .

Bush: Who wants to point out his weaknesses? I mean, I thought the question was quite dumb. . . . What kind of idiot is going to answer that question—'Wait a minute, these five things show that I've been wrong.' Come on.

Scheer: What is the connection between the possession of an MX missile system and being able to do something about problems like Afghanistan or Iran?

Bush: The direct linkage is rather remote, but in the overall linkage, as long as the United States is perceived to not be slipping behind the Soviets in strategic forces, the Soviets will be constrained from adventure.

Scheer: They were weaker in '68 than they are now?

Bush: Much weaker.

Scheer: In '68 they invaded Czechoslovakia. . . .

The interview continued:

Scheer: Do you think the *New York Times* was correct in publishing [the Pentagon Papers]?

Bush: I haven't thought about it, frankly. If everything the *New York Times* can get its hands on—no, I think there are some constraints, some legitimacy to the concept of national security.

Scheer: Do you think that should have applied in the Pentagon Papers case?

Bush: I told you, I don't have a judgment; I don't remember all that ancient history.

Scheer: Well, it isn't so ancient.

Bush: I've told you my position, and you're not going to get an answer.

Scheer: It was important to President Nixon, who you worked with, and he argued that the leak in the Pentagon Papers case was so severe that it threatened the foundations of our government. . . .

Bush: I don't recall what he argued on that—couldn't be less interested.

Scheer: In Watergate?

Bush: Yes, in that whole area. . . .

Scheer: You once said, 'I applaud President Nixon's comprehensive statement which clearly demonstrates again that the President himself was not involved with the Watergate matter.'

Bush: It came out to the contrary—oh come on. . . . Go back and read the whole goddam thing that happened after this. What kind of reporting are you doing? . . . I've dealt with many, many reporters for a year, and you're the first guy that's going into every—trying to go into a whole bunch of things that, obviously, others haven't felt were particularly relevant to what I'm doing right now.

She was in the bunker because the penthouse was vacant

One April 22, 1945, during the final ten days that Hitler's cadre crouched beneath the ruins of Berlin, Eva Braun wrote to her best friend: "I can't understand how all this can happen. It's enough to make one lose one's faith in God!"

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TOM WOLFE at the keyboard

Even space cowboys get the blues—
but you'd never know it from reading *The Right Stuff.*

by Joseph Nocera

Oh, that Tom Wolfe—he really did it this time, didn't he? What a hit! As of early February, his new book, *The Right Stuff*, was heading toward its 16th week on *The New York Times* bestseller list—four solid months of best selling! Even the critics couldn't say enough good things about this book. They loved it! One of them—a former astronaut, in fact—got so carried away that he ended his review by proclaiming grandly that Tom Wolfe had... the right stuff, himself. He was a member of the fraternity—a True Brother! Who would have thought that a book about Project Mercury—those first puny manned capsules that circled the earth, without space walks, dockings or moon landings—would be a big hit, a smash?

Of course, *everybody* thought it would—knew it would—because Tom Wolfe was at the keyboard; that in itself guaranteed a certain measure of success. What's more, he had *been* at the keyboard an awfully long time, so long that at some point in the year before it was finally finished, *The Right Stuff* had gone from being simply a book to being a bona-fide event—indeed, the kind of event publishers (in this case Farrar, Straus & Giroux) like best: the "long-awaited event." *Harper's* magazine had helped matters along in this regard by announcing that *The Right Stuff* would be published "later this year." That was in 1974. Under such conditions, the subject of the book became almost irrelevant; one got the impression at times that Wolfe could have been toiling away on a telephone book and it still would have been a long-awaited event.

There were some good reasons for this, not the least of which was that Tom Wolfe is a terrific writer, so it was assumed that anything he was working on this long and hard would have to be fun to read. As a journalist, that has always been his greatest strength—he could write in such an entertaining way that even when his subject was something you cared not a whit about (something like demolition derbies, for instance) he still had you hooked by the third paragraph. It is a wonderful gift Tom

Joseph Nocera is a contributing editor of The Washington Monthly.

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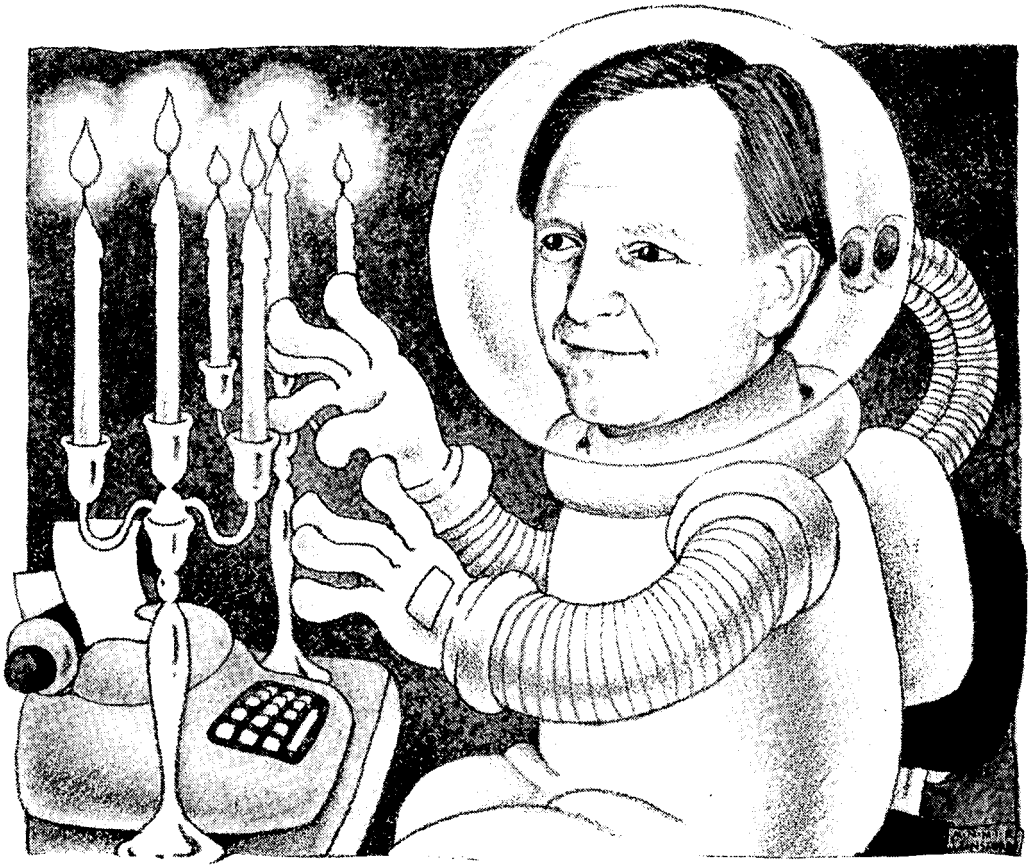

Wolfe has, to be able to write that well, and of course, Tom Wolfe has never been reticent about pointing this out about himself. (In fact, when he writes about himself he can be stunningly self-aggrandizing—the classic example being his 52-page introduction to *The New Journalism*, a collection of articles he edited in 1973—but that doesn't make it any less true.) Maybe he has been a little on the wild side sometimes, what with all the dashes and dots and italics and exclamation points and all the other zany punctuation he made up (though this is greatly subdued in *The Right Stuff*), but even that was part of his charm.

The other reason *The Right Stuff* was so anxiously awaited was that it was a book that required a lot of Good Old Fashioned Shoe Leather, of which Tom Wolfe is a master. This was a book about events that took place almost 20 years ago, and Wolfe has always been good at digging up past events. *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* had proven that, certainly; what was most remarkable about that book was that with all its great descriptions and its details and anecdotes, Wolfe himself had been present for very little of what he described—only the last few chapters, really. The rest was coaxed out of people from interviews. He got these people to tell him just about everything, down to what they were thinking at certain moments, down to what it felt like to take acid—a massive and impressive feat of reconstruction reporting. For most people, I suspect that this sense that he was a great *reporter* (as opposed to being a great writer) was more intuitive than anything else; I've never heard anyone who wasn't either a reporter or someone who dealt with reporters all the time, like a press aide, call someone else "a good reporter." It's not just the sort of thing people think about. Still, what was clear was that Tom Wolfe had all this... stuff... in his book and his articles that few other reporters were able to match.

And when he wrote about the act of reporting—oh, did he wax poetic. He wrote paeans to reporting, odes to it; the idea of tramping around America doing interviews, gathering information and observing people could make him positively breathless. Tom Wolfe is one of those people (rare in the magazine world) who

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would rather do 20 interviews than two; instead of writing around a hole in his narrative, Wolfe wants to fill it in. As he put it once, with characteristic immodesty:

"Saturation Reporting, as I think of it, can be one of the most exhilarating trips, as they say, in the world.... Some of the nicest times are when Pesky Danger rises, and the adrenaline flows, and the whole riot is on, and the shitfire rains from on high—and you discover your set is still on! you're still combing the chaos for details! the creamy stuff you can use!... Why that horrible fiend who just threw the sapper bomb in the ballet master's lap—was that a mishar or a bandana he had around his neck?... What a *scene* this is going to make!"

On both counts—writing and reporting—*The Right Stuff* turned out to have been worth the wait. It is, as expected, a fun read; one of those books (and there haven't been many this year) that you don't want to put down once it finds its rhythm (which happens pretty early on). It just seems to flow along, ever so gracefully; by comparison, another long-awaited event published last year, David Halberstam's *The Powers That Be*, is full of fits and starts, pages and pages of narrative that seems interminable. You never get that slogging-through feeling in *The Right Stuff*.

As for the reporting, well, it's clear enough that once he became interested in the astronauts and Project Mercury, Wolfe wanted to know *everything*. So he dove right in, and when he finally emerged he not only had a solid grasp of the technical details of space travel, but a lot else too—all those terrific details that make the story so engrossing. Like how when Alan Shepard was sitting in the capsule waiting to blast off for America's first manned space flight all he could think of was how badly he wanted to relieve himself (he ended up getting permission to do it in his suit); or about how John Glenn was struck by his sense of disappointment at what the world looked like below as he was orbiting around it (it was decidedly not the awesome sight he and everyone else had expected, and when he radioed to earth that he *was* awed, it was done only to fulfill the world's expectations); and even a very funny description of what the ordeal was like for the chimps who preceded the astronauts into space. *The Right Stuff* is full of these kinds of stories, stories about the space program you had never read anywhere else before.

Yet for all that, *The Right Stuff* falls short of being a great book. The Wolfe pyrotechnics are there, all right, on glittering display, but something else is missing... not in the dig-it-up-and-write-it down sense (for who can do that better than Wolfe?), but in conception, even (excuse me for saying it) in analysis. It is the same problem, I've come to believe, that runs through the whole body of Tom Wolfe's journalism, and it stands out all the more in *The Right Stuff* because *The Right Stuff* is the best thing he has ever done. So it, more than his other books, shows the limits of "that wonderful Wolfe style machine" (*The London Sunday Times*' line); and shows as well the extent to which Tom Wolfe has helped explain "the whole business of 'the way we live now' " (Tom Wolfe's line)—and the extent to which he has not.

The Clean Idea

The central theme in *The Right Stuff* is that there was a quality that set test pilots—from whose ranks the astronauts were drawn—apart from everyone else. Indeed, it set some test pilots apart from other test pilots. What it was they had was hard to pin down exactly, and at least part of the reason was that the test pilots themselves didn't talk about it. They didn't talk about it to their wives, or to each other, even at those moments when they were drunk enough to let their hair down in most other respects; no, they didn't talk about it at all, *ever* (except to Tom Wolfe—that goes without saying). Wolfe then, goes to considerable lengths to describe It. He ends up with the phrase "the right stuff." (A nice phrase, really, although not one destined to enter the language, as "the me decade" did, and "radical chic.") And in explaining It, he writes:

"As to what this ineffable quality was... well, it obviously involved bravery. But it was not bravery in the simple sense of being willing to risk your life. The idea seemed to be that any fool could throw away his life in the process. No, the idea here (in the all-enclosing fraternity)

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seemed to be that a man should have the ability to go up in a hurtling piece of machinery and put his hide on the line and then have the moxie, the reflexes, the experience, the coolness, to pull it back in the last yawning moment—and then go up again the *next day*, and the next day, and every day. . . . Nor was there a *test* to show whether or not a pilot had this righteous quality. There was, instead, a seemingly infinite series of tests. A career in flying was like climbing one of those ancient Babylonian pyramids, made up of a dizzy progression of steps and ledges, a ziggurat, a pyramid extraordinarily high and steep; and the idea was to prove at every foot of the way up that pyramid that you were one of the elected and anointed ones who had *the right stuff* and could move higher and higher. . . ."

So there it was—it had something to do with courage, and ability, and to be honest, the specter of death hung over the whole enterprise (no wonder pilots didn't want to talk about it)—and it also had to do with ambition and getting ahead. The *idea* of the right stuff is a good one; it's different, original—not the sort of thing most journalists would think to write about these days because, well, who wants to write about *courage* (especially a courage tinged with patriotism) in this day and age? Hadn't Stephen Crane covered that? And, closer to the crux of the matter, hadn't the Vietnam war made the kind of patriotic courage *The Right Stuff* was about somewhat disreputable and out of fashion? In effect, the rest of the profession, being more interested in, say, which mid-level official had his hand in the cookie jar, had ceded the courage beat to Wolfe.

But for all its subtlety and originality, the Right Stuff isn't all that complicated an idea. Tough to define, yes; but truly rich in complexity? Hardly. It reminded me a lot of basic mathematical concepts, which even the most gifted teacher can't really convey on a blackboard because they are so. . . well, ineffable, but once the student sees it—*really sees it*—it goes from being impossible to grasp to being simplicity itself. This is not to say that the Right Stuff ranks up there with differential equations; it's just that once you get it figured out, the right stuff is simplicity itself.

In reading back through most of Tom Wolfe's previous books, I kept coming back to this: he finds an idea; it's different,

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it has a little twist to it (Wolfe would never—horror of horrors—print something that might be *conventional wisdom*)—but at its core it is not a terribly complicated idea. There was *The Painted Word,* which might be summarized by saying that nobody buys art because of an appreciation of art, only because of the dictates of fashion; *The Me Decade*—we're all self-absorbed in the 1970s; *Radical Chic*—rich liberals are so full of guilt and so eager to be in style that they can be conned by Black Panthers; *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*—customized cars as the great American art form.

Thinking about the roots of this one-simple-idea phenomenon, two explanations occurred to me. The first, and simplest, is that a large part of Wolfe is the old-fashioned entertainer, the showman—right this way, dear readers, a thrill on every page, satisfaction guaranteed or your money back. Mostly, I admire this—it's a rare pleasure to find a journalist who has an actor's anxiety level about whether he's holding his audience's attention. But it means Wolfe oversimplifies. He finds his subject matter and his one catchy idea around which to organize it, and he's off. Everything fits. Through most of *The Right Stuff*, he makes his narrative work by telling the story through the eyes of the protagonist—a wonderfully effective device, but one that locks him into accepting the protagonist's own perceptions, blind spots included. Were Wolfe to stop and say in his own voice, well wait a sec, this point's going to take a little more explaining... well, then that man over in the third row might get up and go to the men's room, and the lady on the aisle might start to snore, and so on. Once you lose an audience, you can't get it back.

Low-Rent Cellini

The second reason is that Wolfe seems to have a theory about his own life as a magazine writer, which he imposes on all his work. When he was making his reputation as a writer, it was by ignoring the world of New York and the high life. He went out and discovered a world of hippies, demolition derbies, customized cars, test pilots, and people of that ilk. This is no underclass—the people in it have money to own a house and have a car or two. They do not, in fact, lack for much materially. But this group *is* an underclass in the sense that New York, and the moneyed class in general, has always condescended to it. So Wolfe, it is clear, came to feel nothing but scorn for high society. At the same time, he came to embrace, with equal fervor, the proles who inhabited the world of (in his phrase) Low Rent.

This fondness for Low Renters stemmed, I think, from his feeling that he was the one person who could see—*really could see*—that the rest of America out there in the mid-1960s was changing quickly. It wasn't so much morality that was changing at that point, though that would come soon enough; it was more that the middle class was so much more affluent than it had ever been. Money was changing America. And where were all the reporters who should have been covering this fascinating phenomenon? Well, to Tom Wolfe's way of thinking, they were still all stuck in New York, writing about their own little irrelevant world; he, on the other hand, was *out there*, where life was being lived, busy discovering America and writing about it.

There was one problem with Wolfe's dichotomy right off. Though he was writing about the the Low Rent life, Wolfe's audience was still New York. So if he was going to convince New York that these people he was writing about were important, he would have to attempt (especially when he first started doing this) to justify his subjects to his audience. As a result, one comes across some startling, bold-faced statements in these mid-1960s pieces. For example, in *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*, Wolfe spends a lot of time comparing customized cars to Versailles, and the customizers to Picasso, Dali, and half a dozen other artists. ("What you have is something more like sculpture in the era of Benvenuto Cellini, when sculpture was always more tied up with religion and architecture. In a lot of other ways it's like the Renaissance, too.") The idea here seems to be that since it is comparable to "art," it must be important, significant (*so pay attention!*).

At the same time, when Wolfe turned his attention to the world of New York, he was increasingly tough, hostile, and even mean-spirited. More and more, these

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pieces were undisguised attacks on that world, the best example being the two-part article he wrote for the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1964 on the subject of *The New Yorker*. These articles caused an enormous furor at the time, all of which looks pretty foolish some 16 years later. (The reaction from *The New Yorker* family was vitriolic in the extreme: "puts the *Herald Tribune* right down in the gutter"—William Shawn; "inaccurate and sub-collegiate and gleefully and unrelievedly poisonous"—J.D. Salinger; "sly, cruel and to a large extent undocumented"—E.B. White; "as irresponsible as anything I have ever come upon outside the gutter press"—Richard Rovere.) There is not much doubt that Wolfe went into that project with every intention of emerging with, as they say in the trade, a hatchet job. *The New Yorker*, of course, was one of the great sacred cows of Cultureburg (Wolfe's word), an institution that in those days never—but never—felt the sting of even the most muted criticism. There was therefore a certain inevitability about an attack on it from Wolfe, and he lived up to expectations.

Bombs Away

But the biggest problems came when you combined the love of the single clean theory, and the division of the world into good (Low Rent) and bad (Cultureburg), with Wolfe's otherwise admirable will to entertain, to hold his audience. Because when you put all this together, as a writer, you come up with a potent disincentive to looking at the holes in your argument, at what might be a little wrong or a little inaccurate with your neat, iconoclastic idea. And so, when you read Wolfe, you will run across them time and again, these little doubts that pop into your mind, facts and arguments that don't quite fit the theme. Usually they are small, and you don't dwell on them as you are swept away in the rush of Wolfe's prose. But often they linger. Hadn't *The New Yorker*, after all, printed some—no, a *lot*—of first-rate journalism over the years? (Wolfe mentions this possibility, mulls over it for all of two paragraphs... then it's back to the attack! Bombs away!) Wasn't LSD regarded, *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* to the contrary, as extremely dangerous by even the most devoted of drug abusers? And weren't there some people out there who genuinely loved for its own sake the art Wolfe ridiculed in *The Painted Word*? If you had these doubts,you weren't going to have them confirmed by Tom Wolfe.

Coming to grips with that kind of caveat may be No Fun, but it does matter, and *The Right Stuff* is a good place to explain why. On first reading, the Right Stuff theory works beautifully. It makes clear how silly the official *Life*-magazine-and-Walter-Cronkite version of the astronauts, with its emphasis on wholesomeness and bravery, was—for the space flights had nothing to do with what the astronauts really cared about, namely the Right Stuff. Did the astronauts' wives appear on TV to be concerned about their husbands' new risky adventure? In fact they were relieved that the men were finally getting into something less risky than test-piloting. Were the astronauts presented as being intrepid pilots? Actually they were grumbling that space travel took no skill, that even a monkey could do it, and secretly lobbying for the placement of manual controls in their capsules, so they could *fly* the things. And then there is the final delicious irony, which is that once all the adulation came, space flight—previously regarded in the fraternity as being For Sissies—was magically transformed, and became a branch of the Right Stuff itself.

Oh, it works, and besides that it gives Wolfe a chance to continue his celebration of Low Rent. And, if you think about it, you've probably known somebody yourself who had a little of the Right Stuff ethos. Your high-school football coach, the guy down the street who joined the Air Force, the deal-making investment banker, somebody. If you think about that person, you'll remember that while your first impulse might have been to dismiss him as a swaggering fool, he did... have... something. You have to admit it, if you think about it. A certain raw competence, or something. And to come to terms with that, and even learn that it's valuable, is an important step. It's the step Wolfe makes.

But if you're like me, and you think about that person some more, you'll realize that there is another side to him, equally important to the full illumination of his character. And that is the tendency of the person with the Right Stuff to be extremely uncomfortable with all the non-Right

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Stuff aspects of life—emotional interaction, sincerity, admission of failure—even when a mastery of those aspects could make him actually *more* blindingly competent and in control. He is weakened by his fear of the appearance of weakness.

What's more—and what seems important for Wolfe's book—is that, from what we know, the astronauts seem to have had this other side as well. When you look at the subsequent careers of the astronauts, you see a trail of troubled marriages, alcohol, emotional problems. You see Frank Borman, showing considerable Right Stuff by rebuilding the reputation of Eastern Airlines; but then you hear that when a pilot told the FAA about the conditions leading to an Eastern jet's crash, Borman felt threatened and grounded him.

Or, to take it from the other direction, there's the case of John Glenn. In Wolfe's book, Glenn has the least Right Stuff of all the astronauts. He's a prissy, pushy little press-hound doing ostentatious little things to show off. It is Glenn, for instance, who takes laps around the track in the morning, when the other six are still nursing hangovers. It is Glenn who takes himself too seriously, who sets the phony image of the God-fearing, clean-living astronaut.

But today, as a senator, Glenn isn't exactly the kind of person Wolfe makes him out to be. He is, in fact, pretty much the opposite: a hard worker who seems to ignore the press, and who has won a reputation for being willing to spend his time on unsexy, no-win issues guaranteed to keep him out of the papers. How does the John Glenn of *The Right Stuff* square with John Glenn the senator? I don't know, because Wolfe doesn't tell me, but I suspect it's that Glenn's good side represents those qualities that the Right Stuff ethos was totally blind to, in fact almost afraid of.

Doubts like these should have troubled Wolfe. If that admirable quality called the Right Stuff is somehow linked to other qualities that aren't so desirable, then maybe we shouldn't be promoting the Frank Bormans to positions of power and authority on the basis of their one ineffable virtue. Those undesirable qualities might turn out to be—who knows?—as important in the story of the astronauts as the idea of the Right Stuff itself.

It may seem unfair to criticize Wolfe for not writing about what might be wrong with his central idea about the astronauts. It is, after all, an arresting concept, and an author is as entitled as a reader to be momentarily blinded by his own vision. In this case, however, I don't think the criticism is unfair. A few years ago, Wolfe came out with a collection of essays called *Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine*. In it there's a story, first published in 1975, called "The Truest Sport," in which Wolfe investigates the world of—you guessed it—test pilots. A lot of the concepts that eventually found their way into *The Right Stuff* showed up there, up to and including the righteous substance itself. Wolfe hadn't discovered the phrase yet, but he did have the general idea: "Within the fraternity of men who did this sort of thing day in and day out," he wrote, "... mankind appeared to be sheerly divided between those who have it and those who don't—although what *it* was... was never explained."

"It," of course, is the Right Stuff. But what's noteworthy about Wolfe's earlier essay is that it shows he had the concept well-formed, in his head, for at least *four years*—four years and he never asked himself what was wrong with it. Or if he did, it doesn't show. You can't help getting the sense that Wolfe instinctively felt that questioning his clean concept would have spoiled the fun. It fit so well, it made his narrative work so seamlessly, it was such a good way for him to thumb his nose at the prissy New York sophisticates. He probably felt that taking on the problems with his insight would inevitably have meant filling his book with qualifications and balancing paragraphs that would have at best gotten in the way—and at worst, lost the audience.

Maybe. But maybe not. Because when a writer acknowledges a flaw in his central idea, and turns it over in his mind long enough, he often finds a way to turn it to his advantage, to make it part of his story, to use it to strengthen his theory or to come up with a better, different idea, rather than a collection of qualifiers and balancers. If Wolfe had accepted this challenge, faced up to the reverse side of the astronaut's courage, then *The Right Stuff* might have been a great book instead of a good one. Instead, Wolfe ignored it. Muddy the waters? No way! Stick to the story! No quibbling! Full steam ahead! ■

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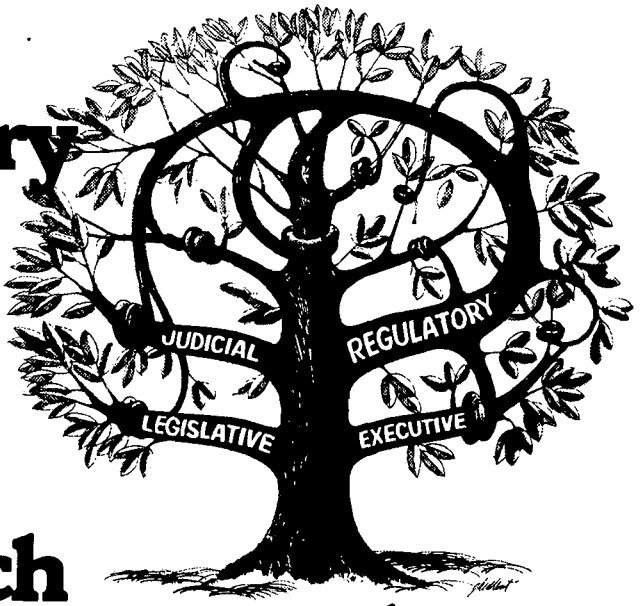

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THE SPY WHO WENT OUT IN THE COLD WAR

The problem of choosing wars wisely

by Thomas N. Bethell

Cold wars have a way of making people very nervous. "While we are sleeping," Dean Rusk once wrote, "two thirds of the world is plotting to do us in." For nearly 30 years—from the end of the second global war in 1945 until the first murmurings of detente in the early 1970s—Rusk and the other political householders of Washington slept fitfully, hearing burglars whenever the wind shifted, padding downstairs at all hours to check the locks, going out on the porch and peering anxiously into the darkness, listening for wolves and jumping when the cat rubbed up against their legs.

Dean Rusk's counterparts on the other side of the world slept the same way, afflicted with the same fears. When the chill night slipped silently across the steppes, it was assumed in Moscow that the fading light and the drifting snow were somehow engineered in Washington. Paranoia is the natural bedfellow of insomnia; together they became the basis for formulating foreign policy on both sides of the global community.

In such a place the streets are not safe. You never know when someone in a flapping bathrobe might come lunging off a porch, mistaking you for a bear or a bird of prey and filling you with nuclear buckshot. The cold war was a hard time for innocent bystanders living in a community where, in due course, *nobody* could get a good night's rest—a place where irritable neighbors snarled at each other's children and heaved bricks through each other's windows. Many people would have moved out if they could have, but there was nowhere to go; the zoning laws were very strict.

Nobody could figure out a way to make the principal householders resolve their differences. In the absence of communication, the adversaries took extraordinary precautions to protect themselves from the real and imagined terrors of the night. At vast expense, they maintained forces equipped with the latest tanks, planes, bombs, missiles and ships. They also surrounded their porches with plainclothesmen who went abroad under cover of darkness to do unmentionable deeds. These people were called *KGB* on one side and *CIA* on the other.

The initials stood for different words and, in theory, for different philosophies, but sometimes the distinctions tended to blur. Richard Helms was one of the plainclothesmen on our side, and Thomas Powers has written a remarkable book about Helms and the CIA* which goes a long way toward clarifying the blur. Flashes of insight flicker through the book,

Thomas N. Bethell is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

**The Man Who Kept The Secrets: Richard Helms and The CIA*. Thomas Powers. Knopf ($12.95).

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illuminating the neighborhood softly in ways we've rarely seen. For example:

"In 1960 Helms asked one of his officers to write a speech he had agreed to deliver before a group of retired military officers on the subject of Communist espionage and subversion. The officer wrote the speech; its tone was calm: Don't be alarmed by Soviet intriguing, be patient, totalitarian systems are inherently weak, democracy will prevail in the end because it speaks to something abiding in the nature of man. Helms read the speech, then looked quizzically at the man who had written it and asked, 'Do you really believe that?'

'Yes,' the officer said.

Helms hesitated, thinking, then said, 'Well, I *guess* I do.'"

An idealist might object that a man with the job of defending democracy shouldn't have to hesitate before endorsing its inherent superiority. But espionage isn't very conducive to idealism. And cold wars have a chilling effect on democracy. The Central Intelligence Agency—in which Richard Helms spent nearly his entire professional life—came into being in 1947, a time when bears and eagles threatened each other in very real and serious ways, a time when idealism had its back to the wall.

The idealists of 1945, sifting through the rubble of war, thought that the only way to prevent another one was to build a system of world government under which every nation would be compelled to forfeit some of its sovereignty for the common good. The point seemed terribly obvious and urgent. A young man named Cord Meyer came back from the battlefields and shared his widely held conclusions in the pages of the *Atlantic:*

"The institution that is ultimately responsible for two world wars within a generation is the sovereign nation-state," he wrote. "Either some measure of world government will be achieved by voluntary consent or our particular civilization will be destroyed."

Briefly there were a few hopeful signs. The newly chartered United Nations in 1946 prevailed upon the Soviet Union to withdraw its troops from Iran—a deed accomplished by negotiation, without bloodshed. But the UN had been crippled at birth by a charter reaffirming rather than compromising the idea of absolute national sovereignty, and nations lost little time learning how to ignore the UN with impunity. Russia seemed to do it all the time. There were feeble efforts to keep the Russians from subverting the governments of Eastern Europe—but many people thought they understood the way the game was played: most of these nations, after all, had allied themselves with Hitler against the Soviet Union, and it wasn't entirely unrealistic for the Russians to be making sure it wouldn't happen again.

But then in March 1948 the Russians overthrew the democratic government of Czechoslovakia, which had never been anti-Soviet, and that was a different story entirely. When Jan Masaryk, the prime minister, "accidentally" fell to his death from his office window, Americans were deeply disturbed. It was only ten years earlier, after all, that Neville Chamberlain had given Czechoslovakia to Hitler at Munich. We thought we had long since learned the lessons of appeasement—lessons learned at the expense of Czechoslo-

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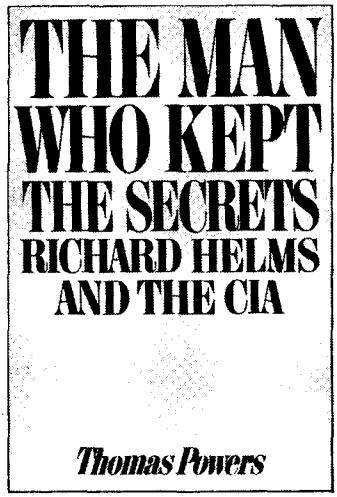

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vakia—and it would never happen again. Now it was happening again and we were powerless to stop it.

The Kremlin was, of course, a place straight out of Central Casting, a place where the sun never seemed to shine, inhabited by shapeless men in one-size-fits-all overcoats, men who seemed somehow to speak without moving their lips and to see without moving their eyes. It was not at all hard to believe that men like these, uttering guttural sounds in a very distant land, were really and truly bent on world domination. A suffocating cloud of mutual distrust descended on Moscow and Washington, snuffing out any hope of communication or accommodation.

In short order, the young men like Cord Meyer became disenchanted. Meyer stopped writing passionate, hopeful pieces for the *Atlantic* and dropped out of sight. When he next appeared, it would be a long time later—in 1967—and involuntarily, in the pages of a very different magazine. *Ramparts* identified him as a CIA officer of long standing who had been bankrolling and controlling the National Student Association for 15 years. It was one thing to be exposed as a spy; it was quite another thing to be exposed as the backstage manipulator of thousands of college students who thought they belonged to an independent organization. The exposure may have troubled Cord Meyer, but it didn't spur him to change careers. He went on to become chief of the CIA's London station, and whatever he thought about what had happened to his earlier idealism, he kept it to himself. Like Richard Helms, he would probably have hesitated before giving an unqualified thumbs-up to the staying power of democracy.

It was the in the rapidly chilling climate of 1947 and 1948 that America began building its first peacetime foreign intelligence agency. In theory, the CIA's mission was to guard against nasty surprises like Pearl Harbor. As challenges go, this was straightforward enough. But the planners wanted something more than a bunch of deep thinkers locked up in a room somewhere, cracking codes and reading cables. They looked out into a bleak world where the Russians seemed to be everywhere, subverting everyone, and they wanted to be able to meet the Russians on equal terms—*if the Russians can subvert, why can't we?* They wanted to make the new CIA, in Powers' words, "the president's most accessible arm in the conduct of foreign policy," to be used as "a navigational aid or a Saturday Night Special." Classic intelligence would provide the navigational aid, a combination of compass and radar; covert action would give the president a snub-nosed .38 to carry in his bathrobe pocket.

Classic intelligence consists of three key functions: assembling information, verifying it, and analyzing it. The third part—analysis—is the easiest for a layman to visualize. The first part involves everything from reading the foreign press ("What use are they?" Nixon complained of the CIA to Ehrlichman: They've got 40,000 people over there reading newspapers"—actually, the CIA has about 15,000 people) to planting spies within the Kremlin walls, sending spy planes over Cuba and spy satellites over everywhere, bugging embassies, and taping millions of hours of coded foreign radio transmissions in the hope that someday our cryptographers will break the codes so the "back traffic" can be played back and understood. The second part of its job—verification—gets the CIA into the tricky business of counterintelligence: spying on our own sources to make sure they're not double agents, checking the information coming to us from the Soviet bloc to make sure it's not being falsified, and putting out disinformation of our own to confuse the people who are trying to do to us what we're trying to do to them.

"Covert action" falls outside the range of these three activities. As defined by a 1948 National Security Council directive, the term covers "propaganda, economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition, and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance groups; and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world."

Covert action is, in short, the no-man's-land between diplomacy and war. If discovered, it can compromise one and precipitate the other. For this reason, there have always been people within the CIA who object to covert action schemes—not on moral or ethical grounds, but because they can be "as dangerous as nuclear weapons," in the words of Lyman Kirkpatrick, a former CIA inspector general who believes that no covert operation

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should ever be authorized unless secrecy can be guaranteed "from inception to eternity." That is a very demanding standard, as events have long since demonstrated.

In a sense, covert action is best understood as the dark side of the drive toward world government after World War II. World government depends on nations voluntarily compromising their individual sovereignty; covert action depends on compromising their sovereignty involuntarily. The rationalization is: "They do it, so we have to do it, too." No matter how true, this argument would never hold up in a court of law—but nations have arranged things so that they don't have to observe the same laws as citizens.

Quick Fix

Covert action wasn't included in the CIA's original mandate. It wasn't covered by the National Security Act of 1947, the law that formally brought the CIA into being. The first time the agency was asked to do a covert job, its general counsel balked. This doesn't fall within the scope of our charter, he said: it's illegal. His objections were dismissed out of hand—by that time, the cold war was on, there was no interest in legal hair-splitting. Ignoring the limitations of the CIA charter, the National Security Council in June 1948 specifically authorized covert operations, to be "so planned and conducted that any United States government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons, and that, if uncovered, the United States government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them."

This was *Mission Impossible* stuff, straight out: "Jim, should you or any of your agents be discovered, the Secretary will disavow... this tape will self-destruct ... *phhhhhht*! ... and now this message from Kellogg's." Except this was the real world. The difference is readily apparent—or *is* it?

The men and women of *Mission Impossible* had to get their jobs done in less than an hour (seven minutes for commercials) every week. They had to be able to provide their mysterious "Secretary" a *quick fix*. That was precisely the subtle attraction of the CIA's covert-action capability.

The chemistry between the CIA and the White House is, in one respect, simple. Within the CIA from its earliest days there have been adventurers—men who love the intrigue, the danger, the exhilaration of running a jungle guerrilla operation under the very nose of a hostile government. Within the White House there is always a lonely man beset by global problems that share one common characteristic: they yield, if at all, only incrementally, grudgingly, glacially. "The adventurers thought of the world as being infinitely plastic," Powers writes. "They thought they could do anything with funds and a broad okay from the top, and they offered policymakers in the late 1940s and early 1950s an irresistible promise: that they might achieve secretly what the United States felt it could not achieve openly." They offered a *quick fix*—and president after president accepted the offer.

This was because CIA covert action seemed to be able to deliver what it promised—in the beginning, at least. For Truman, the plainclothesmen slipped quietly into Italy on the eve of the 1948 elections. A wave of vitriolic anti-Communist propaganda washed across the country, followed closely by an extraordinary outpouring of money to buy votes. All of this was ostensibly the work of Italian centrists; in fact the propaganda was prepared and written in Washington, and the votes were bought by the United States Treasury. For Eisenhower, the plainclothesmen went into Iran, to topple a prime minister who had the appalling cheek to challenge a British oil company [see box, page 38]. They then moved on to Guatemala, to overthrow a duly elected government which had threatened to nationalize the United Fruit Company. Seen in hindsight, these enterprises were open to question, but there was little questioning at the time—because few people knew about the CIA's involvement in them.

News stories said nothing about the CIA, of course. The few publishers and editors who knew anything about clandestine operations kept mum. It was only much later—after the Bay of Pigs, after the assassination attempts, after the disasters in Laos and Vietnam, after the overthrow of Allende in Chile—that one CIA operation after another lost its cover and stood naked before the world, confirming the worst suspicions of anti-Americans everywhere,

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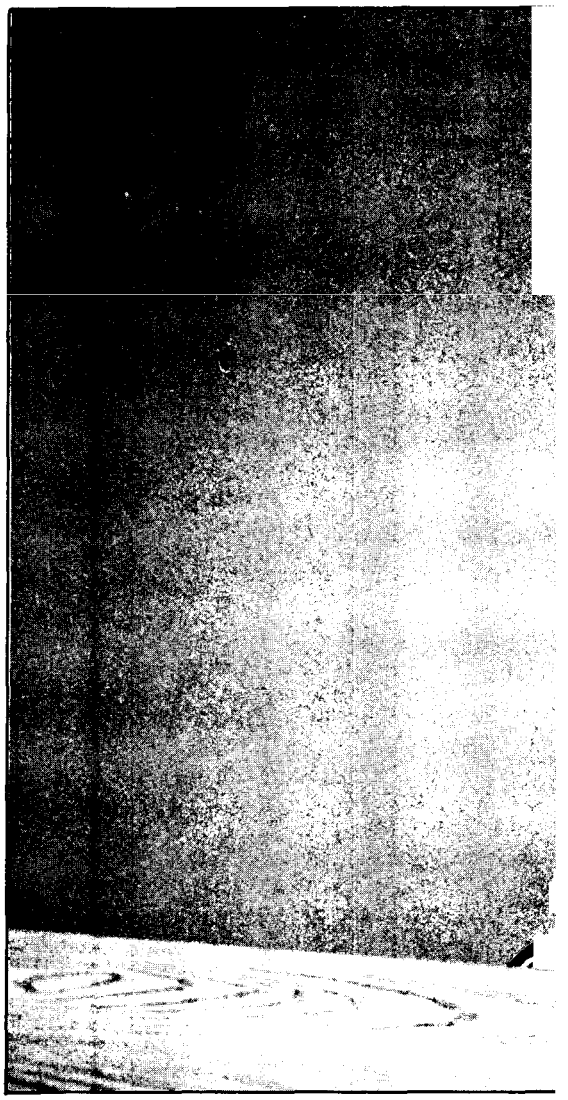
embarrassing the CIA's allies in the White House and on Capitol Hill and in the press, and shocking the American people out of our lingering childlike belief that We were not like Them.

But this later image of the CIA as the Keystone Kops of the spy world—and that is now the image most people probably have—is only partially accurate and, at best, incomplete. Within the agency there have also been men who were inherently skeptical of quick fixes, distrustful of the adventurers, and much more committed to classic intelligence. Richard Helms was one of them. He did not subscribe to the idea that "the shortest distance between two points was violence." He was opposed, for example, to assassinating hostile leaders like Castro and Ho Chi Minh. It had nothing to do with what Helms calls "the soggy mass of morality." He was opposed on purely pragmatic grounds: you couldn't keep it a secret. And when the word got out, as it inevitably would, the CIA's credibility and its effectiveness—its access to the White House—would be compromised. Paraphrasing Helms, Powers writes:

"Somebody would have to do it, and no one could predict with confidence how that somebody would feel about it later. He might go crazy, he might go through a conversion and succumb to feelings of guilt, he might begin to blubber in his cups or send a letter to a congressman or brood over fancied ill treatment and decide to blackmail the agency. Things happen to people. What then? You could give some fellow a sterile gun and send him out to pull the trigger, but the agency would have to live with the danger for the rest of time, and it wasn't worth it."

What about someone like Hitler? Well, *that* was worth it, yes. Everybody could agree on Hitler. But how many Hitlers come along—terminal tyrants that *everybody* can agree on? Getting Hitler would be the moral thing to do. But murder is seldom so morally defensible. Or even sensible. With someone like Ho, how could you be sure that his successor wouldn't be worse? And besides—how could you do it in *secret*? The Vietnamese would know how it happened, "and they'd probably be in a position and mood to retaliate. There is a tacit truce between nations on such matters: once you start killing them, they start killing you."

Helms wasn't the only one in Washington to believe that. Lyndon Johnson asked for a CIA briefing on the agency's clandestine activities not long after the assassination of John Kennedy. There, for the first time, Johnson learned that the CIA had been trying for three years to assassinate Castro—at the direct and insistent orders of President Kennedy and his brother Robert. Johnson never fully accepted the notion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted on his own; he came to believe that Kennedy's assassination was somehow an act of retaliation, on the part of people who knew we had arranged the overthrow and murder of Diem in Vietnam and were trying to do the same thing in Cuba.



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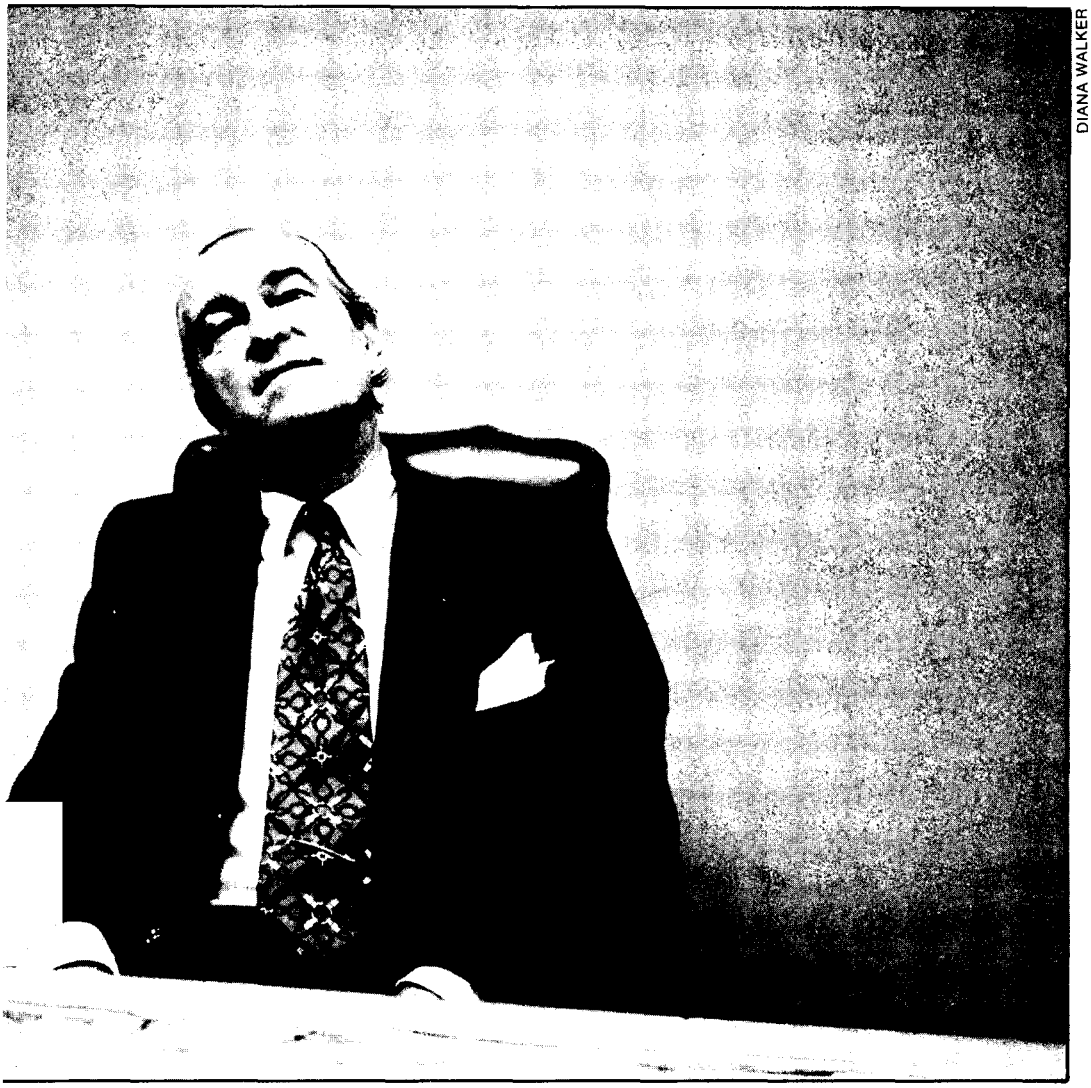

DIANA WALKER

Richard Helms

Like Helms, Johnson had little use for the soggy mass of morality, but he also had little interest in finishing up the way Jack Kennedy did—so he terminated what he called "our Murder Incorporated operation in the Caribbean." It isn't hard to assume he must have been partly motivated to do so by learning of the sheer size and incompetence of the anti-Castro operation: 600 CIA case officers running 3,000 agents in Miami; plots to blow up Castro on the ocean floor with an exploding sea shell, plots to give him a toxic wet suit, plots to poison his cigars. . . and the most bizarre plot of all:

"Cuba was to be flooded with rumors that the Second Coming was imminent, that Christ had picked Cuba for his arrival, and that He wanted the Cubans to get rid of Castro first. Then, on the night foretold, a U.S. submarine would surface off the coast of Cuba and litter the sky with star shells, which would convince the Cubans that The Hour was at hand." Within the CIA this particular scheme was known as "elimination by illumination."

Helms knew, from direct experience, that classic intelligence was far more important than covert action in making the CIA a valuable navigational aid for the White House. The history compiled by Powers bears this out. Mention the CIA in

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connection with Cuba, for example, and most people will think only of the Bay of Pigs fiasco or the abortive efforts to assassinate Castro. But, during the missile crisis of 1962, it was quiet, classic, mosaic-constructing intelligence work that enabled the CIA first to identify with precise accuracy the missiles being emplaced and then to report in amazing detail the capabilities of the missiles—not just their range and destructive power, but the speed with which they could be readied for firing and the odds of their surviving an American bomber attack. These were not idle matters, since a single surviving missile could take out any American city east of Chicago.

The CIA was able to assemble precise information on these missiles because it had microfilms of the actual training manuals the missile crews used. The CIA had the manuals because, years previously, it had painstakingly cultivated a high-ranking Russian who had diligently microfilmed 10,000 pages of secret documents. At the time he did so, nobody was anticipating a missile crisis in Cuba—but when it happened, the files were ready, the films were in them, the information could be retrieved and analyzed and the reports brought quickly to the Situation Room at the White House.

This was classic intelligence at its very best, all the pieces linking as tightly as lovers' fingers: the spy planes brought back the pictures from the Caribbean, the photo-interpreters identified the missiles, the people with the horn-rimmed glasses worked the computers and brought up the vital data from the quiet man with the microfilm camera in Moscow. You couldn't ask for better than that—and that, to Richard Helms, was what the CIA was all about.

Honorable Men

But Helms, like his predecessors, wore more than one hat. If he was a master of classic intelligence on the one hand, he was a quintessential bureaucrat on the other. He did not see this as a contradiction in terms, but it was, and in the end his dedication to the fine art of political compromise not only robbed him of his effectiveness but also damaged the CIA in very fundamental ways.

Helms was cautious by nature. During World War II, when he was in the Navy, Helms had a chance to join the CIA's derring-do prototype, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which was being cobbled together by a loose collection of former Ivy Leaguers—an old-boy organization full of people who were easily bored by the paperwork of managing a war. Helms decided not to make the shift; the Navy was a known quantity, OSS seemed bizarre and temporary. It was only when the Navy *assigned* him to OSS that Helms became a spy, and over the years he never did much field work—he visited Vietnam personally only twice, for example—because his strong preference was for deskwork in Washington. He read reports, he edited them for style (it was okay to use the word "however" but not to begin a sentance with it), and he took the reports to the White House.

It was not Helms's job, as he saw it, to argue with the president of the United States; it was his job to receive orders from the Oval Office and carry them out. If the adventurers offered the president a quick fix, and the president said "do it," Helms would not object. Oh, he *might*—but never to the point of saying: Mr. President, think again, this is a nutty idea, I *know* it's a nutty idea, you have to trust me. To take a stand like that, Helms believed, would simply mean he would lose access to the president. What would be gained from speaking up if the price you paid was to be frozen out? Nearly everyone in the upper reaches of government asks himself that question at one time or another, and nearly everyone arrives at the same answer. Better to make a perfunctory objection, or none at all, and then say *Yessir* and be on your way. That was Helms's view. So he buttoned his lip, and led the CIA into one questionable undertaking after another, exactly in the manner of his predecessors.

Some of these are legendary by now—most conspicuously the Bay of Pigs. Helms opposed it, but quietly. The attempts to kill Castro—Helms opposed them, too. But quietly. The massive intervention in Chile that ended with the death of its elected Marxist president, Salvador Allende—Helms had grave doubts about that, too, but he kept his doubts to himself.

Helms kept his doubts to himself even when he knew the CIA charter was being

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flagrantly violated. When first Johnson and then Nixon ordered the surveillance of American citizens at home, Helms knew it was illegal. In a 1971 speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, a speech intended to shore up public support for the CIA, he went to great lengths to assure his audience that the CIA had no interest in domestic surveillance: "We do not have any such powers and functions; we have never sought any; we do not exercise any. In short, we do not target on American citizens."

He could hardly have been more explicit—or less truthful. The CIA at that time had been spying on Americans for years. Two years earlier, for example, Helms had delivered a CIA report on radical American college students to Henry Kissinger with a cover note: "This is an area not within the charter of this Agency, so I need not emphasize how extremely sensitive this makes the paper. Should anyone learn of its existence, it would prove most embarrassing for all concerned." In front of the editors, two years later, Helms said nothing of all that; on the contrary, he said with a straight face: "The nation must to a degree take it on faith that we too are honorable men."

Like Cord Meyer and so many others, Helms worked out his own way of dealing with the real world. When the CIA finally came under scrutiny, and investigators wanted information on the agency's testing of mind-altering drugs, Helms simply shredded his files. When he came back from a meeting with Nixon where he was told to spend $10 million if necessary in Chile to "make the economy scream," he did not type out his resignation; he did his job and advised reluctant subordinates to do theirs. "Nobody," as one of them said, "was going to go into the Oval Office, bang his fist on the table, and say we *won't* do it." After all, Kissinger could not have been more plain ("I don't see why we have to let a country go Marxist just because its people are irresponsible") and so Helms, the loyal soldier/bureaucrat, proceeded to turn Chile on its head, as though it were just another banana republic that had gotten uppity with the United Fruit Company. The idealists of 1945 would have been aghast, but it was not their world that Richard Helms lived in and accommodated.

In any case, Helms had ample reason to be cynical about the value of speaking up. Throughout the course of the war in Vietnam, the CIA's analysts—the purveyors of classic intelligence—had been the bearers of bad news to the White House. Very early they warned of the quagmire ahead; the warnings were ignored. Later, they continued to supply information suggesting that the war was not being won, could not be won. Nobody in the White House wanted to hear that. Helms tired quickly of being berated by people like Walt Rostow and McGeorge Bundy. Neither Johnson nor Nixon wanted to listen to the CIA's gloomy assessments.

Helms knew that to push too strongly meant being ostracized; like his predecessors, he concluded that no principle was worth the risk. When you strain out all the exotic CIA seasonings, you are left with the bare, ugly soup bone of *surviving*: getting along by going along. And that was really all that nourished Richard Helms—the same broth that feeds so many people in political Washington. In the end, when Helms had been caught perjuring himself in testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee, the master of the CIA would be reduced to plea-bargaining—agreeing to confess his guilt, as long as the government would agree to give him his pension. That was what it all came down to, for Richard Helms, finally.

Generation Gap

So we learn that Richard Helms was our own home-grown version of a Good German. But to leave it at that would be to leave an important part of the story untold. Conventional wisdom holds that a new charter and expanded congressional oversight will strip the CIA of tarnish. It won't—it may keep the CIA's adventurers on a tighter rein, it may protect against domestic surveillance and exploding cigars, but it will not address the real legacy of Richard Helms, because that legacy has been obscured by the more spectacular foul-ups of the CIA's clandestine warriors. The more important and more widely overlooked fact is that Helms, in his dedication to the art of bureaucratic compromise, very nearly destroyed the CIA's ability to carry out its fundamental mission, the mission that he himself believed in: classic intelligence.

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The Man Who Kept The Secrets is filled with examples. Consider, for instance, the case of CIA analyst Anthony Riccio. In 1970 Riccio was asked by his superiors to prepare a report on the defenses of Son Tay, a North Vietnamese prison where captured American pilots were being held. The place was guarded by militia—what were they armed with? Riccio didn't know, and the files were no help. The only honest answer was simple: "We don't know what kinds of weapons the militia at Son Tay have."

Riccio told his boss that. His boss, to his surprise, refused to accept the report. Without so much as a shred of supporting evidence, he edited the report so that it came out saying that the militia at Son Tay are *probably* (standard CIA protective word) armed with pitchforks, machetes, and a few old Japanese and French rifles. So much for *that*. The report went on up through channels, and gradually Riccio came to understand that this was the way the game was played: get along, go along. They don't want to hear we don't know. They want something hard. What they want, they get.

At the time, Riccio didn't know what his report was going to be used for. Some time later he was reading his morning newspaper and found out. A surprise raid had been staged at Son Tay—a dramatic rescue attempt. It failed, not only because the prisoners had been moved but because the militia turned out to be armed with modern submachine guns, with which they mounted a spirited and successful defense, a defense that cost the lives of many of the raiders.

Riccio decided to get out of the CIA, and asked for a meeting with Helms to explain why. At first they talked of the trivia of Riccio's job—the feckless assessments of North Vietnamese agricultural production, the attempts to quantify things that could not be quantified. Helms asked mildly if that really mattered.

"Riccio said no," Powers writes, "but added, his voice rising, that there was something which *did* matter. He described the phony estimate of Son Tay militia armament, said the militia turned out in the event to have been armed with submachine guns, and then, pointing his finger directly at Helms, said, 'People's *lives* were at stake!' Helms sat poker-faced throughout, and when Riccio was done began talking about the generation gap."

It was a generation gap that also afflicted a young CIA analyst named Sam Adams, an academic sort who liked nothing better than a desk piled high with reports and printouts full of numbers. In the spring of 1967 it was Adams's job to contribute a five-page section to a 30-page report on "Capabilities of the Vietnamese Communists for Fighting in South Vietnam." Adams was to analyze the enemy's Order of Battle (OB)—providing a detailed assessment of fighting strength, based on breaking out all the different units that were known to be in the field, assessing their structure, whether they were operating at full strength, how much they were affected by desertions and casualties, that sort of thing.

Among all the numbers that Adams had at hand, there was one that never seemed to change. It was the Pentagon's number, not the CIA's; it was the aggregate OB number, which the Pentagon had decided was 270,000. This was the total number of soldiers and guerrillas that the Pentagon believed the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front were capable of throwing against the combined forces of the Americans and the South Vietnamese. It was the most important number there was.

At first, Adams accepted the number uncritically, but then it got him into trouble. He had calculated that the North Vietnamese and the NLF were losing perhaps as many as 100,000 deserters a year, and suffering 150,000 casualties. If their *total* OB was 270,000, they were obviously close to defeat. Adams reported this, and his assessment made its way to the White House, where it was the source of great cheer.

It was also wildly wrong. Quietly, veteran CIA analysts slipped Adams the word: Our estimates are much higher than the Pentagon's, but Helms doesn't want a fight, so he's using theirs. Adams piled fresh printouts on his desk and went back to work. Running the numbers again, he came up with an overall enemy OB of 600,000—nearly three times the size of the Pentagon's estimate. To his surprise, however, he couldn't get anybody in authority to accept his figures. He even went to Saigon, to struggle with the military's number-crunchers face to face. When he

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Honesty might have saved lives in Vietnam. But it could have cost Richard Helms his job. He wanted to keep his job. So he lied.

would demonstrate the accuracy of his numbers, they would simply respond by flat-out *deleting* enemy units so that their total OB stayed the same. In the midst of this exercise, a telegram arrived from Helms ordering Adams to bag it. When the CIA's final report went to the White House, over Helms's signature, it contained the Pentagon's OB estimate.

That was the estimate still in use when the North Vietnamese unleashed the Tet offensive early in 1968. Even the CIA's own people in Vietnam failed to see it coming, lulled into complacency by the widespread belief that the enemy was on the ropes—had to be, the numbers said so. It was Pearl Harbor all over again. On the very morning of the offensive, while the attacks were already under way in the north, the CIA in Saigon was telling Washington by cable: "There is nothing of significance to report."

It was significant to Adams, however, when he read about Tet and saw the bloody battles on television. He realized with horror that the Pentagon's expunged enemy units—the ones that had been arbitrarily deleted to keep the overall OB at 270,000—were doing much of the fighting. Americans were losing their lives to an enemy that the Pentagon had tried to eliminate with the stroke of a pen. *It was Helms's pen.* When the White House demanded an explanation for the botched estimates, Adams went to the CIA inspector general and filed formal charges against Helms. He also asked for a meeting with Helms.

"The first thing he said to me," Adams recalled later, "was, 'Don't take notes.' To the best of my recollection, the conversation then proceeded along the following lines. He asked me what was bothering me; did I think my superiors were treating me unfairly, or weren't they promoting me fast enough? No, I said. My problem was that he caved in on the numbers right before Tet. I enlarged on the theme for about ten minutes. He listened without expression, and when I was done, he asked me what I would have him do—take on the whole military?

"I said that, under the circumstances, that was the only thing he could have done; the military's numbers were faked. He then told me that I didn't know what things were like, that we could have told the White House there were a million more Vietcong out there, and it wouldn't have made the slightest difference in our policy. I said we weren't the ones to decide about policy; all we should do was to send up the right numbers, and let them worry."

But Helms was not about to adopt that kind of approach to his job. It might have saved lives but it also might have cost him his job, and he knew which was more important. He also knew how to make sure Adams's accusations went nowhere. With the cooperation of the inspector general, he appointed a board of review to look into the charges. Composed entirely of Helms's immediate subordinates, the board delayed action for more than seven months. By that time, the presidential elections were over. Adams thought about going to see the new president-elect, Richard Nixon, but cooler heads told him to wait; in any case, Helms got there ahead of him. Nixon assured Helms that he could continue in his job. Adams? Nixon never heard of Adams.

That was too bad—not just for Adams but for the White House as well. Although it stretches the imagination to assume that

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Nixon would have demanded reform at the CIA if he had known of the games Helms was playing—after all, Nixon didn't want to know the truth any more than Johnson, and Helms was just trying to *survive*—the fact remains that the White House continued to be given bad data and continued to make policy on the basis of that data.

"Early in 1971," Powers writes, "the CIA told the White House that the North Vietnamese did not have reserves enough in Laos to put up more than light, sporadic resistance to a South Vietnamese foray across the Ho Chi Minh Trail. It turned out that they had reserves aplenty, and the operation, Lam Song 719, was a disastrous failure. More than 600 American helicopters were hit by North Vietnamese fire and 100 were shot down outright. The South Vietnamese came back in wild disorder holding on to the helicopter skids, and a great many did not come back at all."

Then there was the Sihanoukville story. Over a period of more than five years, a senior CIA analyst named Paul Walsh insisted that the North Vietnamese could

'Sic semper politic

Thomas Powers dismisses the 1953 coup in Iran with a single brief reference, calling it "a classic of quiet political subversion, accomplished by Kermit Roosevelt with a handful of aides and a suitcase of money." The craftsmanship was excellent. What about the cause? The first rule for the use of covert action is: A truly vital American interest must be at stake. Was this the case in 1953?

Anyone seeking the answer to that question should read *Present at the Creation*, Dean Acheson's memoirs. His careful account of the conflict between the British Iranian Oil Company and the Iranian prime minister Mohammed Mossadegh makes the matter clear: Mossadegh wasn't a Communist, he wasn't even pro-Soviet. He was just fighting the mind-boggling greed of the British oil interests.

The seeds of the controversy were sown in an action taken by the Iranian parliament in 1947. In the small print of an act rejecting Soviet demands for an oil concession, the legislators included a provision requiring a review of the Anglo-Iranian concession of 1933.

The Iranian commission set up in 1949 to review the British concession suggested that the oil company should make its books available, hire more Iranians, and sell oil to Iranians at the cost of production rather than at the price charged on the world market. Is it possible that the long chain of events—the international jockeying, the propaganda, the CIA coup, the reign of the Shah and his close alliance with seven U.S. presidents ("a twentieth century ruler who has found in power a constructive instrument to advance social and economic reform in an ancient land"—the words of Harvard's 1968 honorary LL.D. citation), and the more recent horrors—is it possible that these stemmed directly from the mild requests of 1949?

Yes.

British intransigence led to Iranian belligerence, then to nationalization, long and bitter negotiations between the Iranians and the British, then to U.S. diplomatic efforts, then to fights between Mossadegh and the Shah, between Mossadegh and the military, then to the plotting of a coup and finally to the CIA solution.

"In the end," Acheson writes, "a new concession agreement was worked out by a consortium of oil companies, American and European, in which Anglo-Iranian had less than half an interest—a far less favorable result than it could have obtained in 1950."

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When the White House wants action, covert or otherwise, it wants action the day before yesterday. The White House doesn't want to hear that the CIA isn't ready or may not have precisely the right people to work with.

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not possibly be getting significant supplies through the Cambodian port of Sihanoukville. When the military came up with hard evidence of major weapons traffic through Sihanoukville, Walsh showed them aerial photographs of a jungle trail which, he said, accounted for the supplies. The analysts looked at the pictures: Are you kidding? This isn't a truck route—it's covered with grass *four feet tall.*

But Walsh stuck to his numbers and Helms stuck by Walsh. Neither of them revealed a fact that both knew: the CIA had a spy at Sihanoukville, an agent recruited years previously in Hong Kong in the best intelligence tradition, and he had access to bills of lading. His reports told the CIA that weapons traffic through Sihanoukville was more than three times what Walsh was reporting. The solution? His reports were simply ignored, destroyed; they disappeared.

Much later, after the invasion of Cambodia, incoming military reports told the White House what Helms had not—and the White House demanded an explanation. Helms thereupon appointed a committee to look into the situation. He was, of course, interested in the truth—but he already *knew* the truth. He was also interested in surviving. So the man he named to chair the committee was: Paul Walsh.

petroleum'

I remember sitting on the veranda of a wooden house newly constructed by the U.S. aid mission in Vientiane in the summer of 1955. The aid mission had just built a compound for U.S. personnel. All the houses were designed to beat the heat by the massive use of air-conditioning, for which there was insufficient power in the capital of the elephant kingdom of Laos at the time. The air-conditioners were silent, the houses uninhabitable. Fortunately they had porches. The man who had just opened the CIA's first station there sipped his drink and tried to cool off. He was a keen student of China, fluent in several Chinese dialects—a serious, thoughtful, very bright man. He was trying to learn Laotian. Neither he nor anyone else in the agency then knew the language.

"We really don't know anything about this country," he said to me. "I just hope they'll give me time to learn. I don't want to end up with operations as inappropriate to our needs as this damned house."

They didn't give him the time. They never do. Within two years he had been swept away, replaced by more activist types who were trying to respond to Washington's demands to *do something.*

—Joseph Burkholder Smith

Joseph Burkholder Smith spent 25 years in the CIA before retiring in 1975.

Audience-Participation

A close reading of *The Man Who Kept The Secrets* suggests that the solution to the CIA's problems lies beyond the reach of any congressional committee. It lies, at least in large part, within the White House.

"Intelligence is not written for history," the saying goes. "It's written for an audience." The CIA's audience, like it or not, is the solitary occupant of the Oval Office. How the agency conducts itself is, in the end, up to him. He chooses whether to accept its numbers, its estimates, its educated misgivings. If he does not—if he makes it clear that he finds such reports offensive—the spymaster/bureaucrat will go back to his office, brood for a while, and then, if the risk of ostracism seems to be looming, he will contrive ways to protect himself.

The record shows that every president from Truman to Nixon abused the CIA—paying too little attention to making it into a functional radar system, and counting on it too much as a quick-fix Saturday Night Special. When the CIA's numbers came out wrong, or when its covert operations failed, the president washed his hands. He and his experts—the Bundys, the Rostows, the Kissingers, the Brzezinskis—would speak scathingly of the CIA among themselves, but that would be that. The obvious lessons never seemed to be learned, even though the CIA's shortcomings could be

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politically disastrous for the White House—as Tet was for Lyndon Johnson and as the pictures of soldiers clinging to helicopter skids nearly were for Richard Nixon. It's not at all clear that any of this has changed; Jimmy Carter's White House didn't want to hear any bad news about turmoil in Iran, so the CIA didn't give it any, and as recently as February 5 *The Washington Star* carried a report by Henry Bradsher that CIA director Stansfield Turner "has been known to change analytical conclusions before sending them to the White House." That sounds ominously familiar.

No amount of well-intended reform is likely to change this pattern. For one thing, neither the CIA nor any president will ever really trust Congress, nor vice versa, and with good reason.

"Intelligence is the most political of professions," Powers writes, "subject to endless attempts at meddling by every sort of special interest across the spectrum of domestic politics: by Republicans who want to blame the Democrats for 'losing' China, Air Force generals who suspect CIA analysts are deliberately underestimating Russian bomber production, liberals who think the CIA has a positive preference for right-wing military juntas, conservatives convinced Castro would never have come to power if the CIA weren't soft on communism, State Department Arabists who think the agency is blinded by the intimacy of its ties to Israel, Jewish organizations which are sure the CIA deliberately ignores a fundamental Arab intention to destroy Israel."

This is not to say that Congress shouldn't have a more active oversight role with the CIA. It should certainly pay much closer attention to the agency's overall appropriations and staffing requirements (do we really need 15,000 people over there?) and to the effectiveness of the CIA's internal safeguards against abuse such as its inspector-general system—which Powers shows has invariably worked to the disadvantage of CIA officers who objected to wrongheaded policies and tried to channel their objections through the system, playing by the rules, only to find themselves without an ombudsman.

But the quickest and by far the most inexpensive way to assure the proper use of the Central Intelligence Agency would be to require each president to read *The Man Who Kept The Secrets*. Last year Jimmy Carter told a group of visitors to the White House: "You know, I read 300 pages of government documents every day." Including the chapter notes—which should not be missed—Powers's book is 376 pages long. That's a good day's work for a president, and if he doesn't quite get finished, he would be well advised to keep on reading before he goes to sleep.

Wake Up And Read

Tonight, for example, the president might profitably read about the Meo tribesmen and the CIA. It's in the book, pages 178-180, won't take long. There he will find what happened to a group of Vietnamese when they ran afoul of the CIA, the Pentagon, and the White House.

In the beginning, a few hundred Meos were organized and trained by a handful of CIA officers in 1962 to harass the North Vietnamese traffic along the Ho Chi Minh trail. They did the job well—so well that they came to the attention of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and President John F. Kennedy. Applying his own brand of logic to the situation, McNamara reasoned that if a program could succeed using a few hundred tribesmen, it would succeed thousands of times better using tens of thousands of tribesmen. So the Meos were assembled into a 30,000-man army, with battalions and field headquarters and transportation and communication and flags. This brought them to the attention of the North Vietnamese, who assigned a high priority to their total eradication. "The result," Powers writes, "was the destruction of the Meos as a people. Of perhaps a quarter of a million Meos in 1962, only a pitiful remnant of 10,000 escaped to Thailand in 1975."

CIA men who worked with the Meos are still bitter about what happened when the Washington experts moved in, and their bitterness is understandable. The man in the Oval Office should remember the Meos the next time he looks around for a quick fix.

Studying the map of Afghanistan, he doubtless feels the urge for a quick fix right now. He must be desperate to do something that will make life really uncomfor-

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table for all those furry Russians squatting in their tanks in Kabul. By now he has probably talked at length with aides who know whether the CIA has any contact with the Afghan rebels. If so, he has certainly learned that the rebels are loosely organized and poorly armed.

He can get weapons to them, of course. He can even arrange, perhaps, to help them with training (although there's probably no one on hand who speaks the language). It can be done; the Russians say it's already being done, and they may be telling the truth. But among the president's advisers will be men who think this is *not enough*. Frustrated, they will want to *do more*. The urge is understandable, and perhaps there is much that can be done—but they, too, should read *The Man Who Kept The Secrets;* they should learn, once and for all, that there are limits to what can be done with an intelligence agency. To exceed those limits is to destroy it.

Back in the early days of the cold war, when nearly everyone in Washington thought they heard Russians clomping across the front porch, the president announced what came to be called the Truman Doctrine. Its essence was simple: "containment." Walter Lippmann defined that as "a policy of holding the line and hoping for the best... Moscow, not Washington, would define the issues.... The policy can be implemented only by recruiting, subsidizing, and supporting a heterogeneous array of satellites, clients, dependents, and puppets—a coalition of disorganized, disunited, feeble and disorderly nations, tribes, and factions around the perimeter of the Soviet Union." It seemed to him a questionable substitute for a policy based more on understanding why people chose to become communists, and on showing them why this country offered something better.

The idealists of 1945 thought, for a time, that the United States really could lead the world out of the abyss into which it had fallen twice within a generation. The very fact that the new United Nations organization was being located in the United States seemed a good omen to E.B. White, writing one of his unsigned "Notes and Comment" pieces in *The New Yorker:*

"One thing we can be glad of is that the conference is to be held in this country," he wrote, in terrible ignorance of the days and years to come. "The United States is regarded by people everywhere as a dream come true, a sort of world state in miniature. Here dwell the world's emigrants under one law, and the law is: *Thou shalt not push thy neighbor around.* By some curious divinity which in him lies, Man in this experiment of mixed races and mixed creeds has turned out more good than bad, more right than wrong, more kind than cruel, and more sinned against than sinning. This is the world's hope and its chance."

In the tumult of cold wars old and new, those words sound frail and misty now, like a flute in a hurricane. You can barely hear the music against the reverberating cacophony of the recent past—a time when we learned, the hard way, that not everybody abroad or at home had any reason to regard the Unites States as a dream come true. Revelations about the CIA have been just one small part of a very bad dream—a dream that has seemed endless, like any self-respecting nightmare. There is no certainty among us on the question of whether the nightmare is over or, if not, when it will be.

But the rest of the world doesn't wait for us to decide such questions. The way things have been happening out there, we really don't have the luxury of continuing to wring our hands over the painful discoveries of the past two decades, when we learned that we were not what we thought we were. Having learned that, the question is: What are we going to do about it?

The world is, as it was before, a place where some of the sounds we hear in the night are imagined and some are very real. The neighborhood on nights like these is obviously a dangerous place, and it is tempting to flip the safety off the .38 and go out on the porch, ready for whatever we find out there. It would be better to turn on the lights and read *The Man Who Kept The Secrets.* We might learn something valuable about ourselves, something useful about the neighborhood we live in. We might even feel encouraged to go out into the neighborhood with our eyes wide open, prepared for anything—bad or good—and prepared to let the neighbors see us for who we are, and were, and might yet become. It couldn't hurt. Who knows—we might even be able to hear the sound of the flute, and the day might come when we could put words to paper like E.B. White's, without being embarrassed to read them later. ■

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The BABBITT Test

Coming to terms with businessmen

by Nicholas Lemann

"His name was George F. Babbitt," Sinclair Lewis wrote nearly 50 years ago, early on in his great dismemberment of the American businessman, the Midwest, and bourgeois provincial culture. "He was 46 years old now, in April 1920, and he made nothing in particular, neither butter nor shoes nor poetry, but he was nimble in the calling of selling houses for more than people could afford to pay."

Lewis got poor Babbitt right enough to make his name part of the language as a symbol of crass commercialism, narrow-mindedness, and vacuous boosterism. Babbitt was crude ("He always peppered and salted his meat, and vigorously, before tasting it") but prided himself on his good taste and cultivation. He was exuberantly conformist ("The extraordinary, growing, and sane standardization of stores, offices, streets, hotels, clothes, and newspapers throughout the United States," he says, "shows how strong and enduring a type is ours") but celebrated rugged individualism. He wasn't very smart or good-looking. He cared only for making money and otherwise getting ahead. He believed in nothing except "the religion of business." Perhaps most annoyingly, he held all his views in a boisterously friendly manner that served to hide from himself and those around him (but not the reader!) the meanspiritedness and fear and hatred that lay behind them.

"The ideal of American manhood and culture," says Babbitt in one particularly florid expression of his beliefs before the real estate board of his hometown, the thriving metropolis of Zenith, "isn't a lot of cranks sitting around chewing the rag about their Rights and their Wrongs, but a God-fearing, hustling, successful, two-fisted Regular guy, who belongs to some church with pep and piety to it, who belongs to the Boosters or the Rotarians or the Kiwanis, to the Elks or Moose or Red Men or Knights of Columbus, or any one of a score of organizations of good, jolly, kidding, laughing, sweating, upstanding, lend-a-handing Royal Good Fellows, who plays hard and works hard, and whose answer to his critics is a square-toed boot that'll teach the grouches and smart-alecks to respect the He-man and get out and root for Uncle Samuel, U.S.A.!"

Although this country was then and is now generally assumed to be dominated by business and a business culture, no chroni-

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cler of American life has captured that world as vividly or as enduringly as Lewis did in *Babbitt*. The picture has since been refined and expanded, but for years it has been the basis of the attitudes of intellectuals, students, sophisticates, boulevardiers, and others who live outside Babbitt's world toward the business culture.

Much of the work of the "neoconservatives" has been directed toward recasting this outsiders' image of the American businessman. The latest major event in this campaign is the publication of Norman Podhoretz's *Breaking Ranks* (Harper & Row, $15). Although it's mainly an attack on the intellectuals for their snobbery, rather than a paean to the businessmen for their nobility, *Breaking Ranks* is still in effect, and intent, a rejection of the intellectual culture in favor of the business culture to which it has always stood in opposition.

It should be said that *Breaking Ranks* deals with much more than just this one point. It is, on the one hand, a well put-together and well-told history of the intellectual life in New York City since the thirties. On the other hand, it is also a book of impressive pettiness and vituperation, in which, of the dozens of main characters, only one—Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan—is presented at all flatteringly. Its subject matter is Podhoretz's shift from conservatism to, briefly, radicalism, and then back to conservatism. As such, its specifics have to do mostly with Vietnam, Communism, and race relations in the realm of politics. In the realm of culture, it calls forth an insular West Side world where everybody's son was dropping out of Hampshire College to become a potter and where writers for quarterlies were assumed to be the setters of the nation's agenda. Podhoretz is not entirely immune to the provincialism for which he criticizes the left intellectuals: Is it really so that "the Kennedy White House cared, and cared passionately, about its reputation among intellectuals"? That Richard N. Goodwin was "one of [Lyndon] Johnson's most important assistants"? That the civil rights movement, with its roots firmly outside New York, had less effect on the events of the sixties than the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy?

That aside, the subtext of *Breaking Ranks* is a series of ideas about ambition and virtue; Podhoretz is a literary critic by training and he bases his defense of business more on aesthetic than economic grounds. He argues that instead of being divided into a party of the ambitious (businessmen) and a party of the virtuous (intellectuals), this country is in fact divided between those who admit to their ambition and those who don't.

Sniffing Out Ambition

In the first place, Podhoretz says, intellectuals have traditionally regarded ambition and virtue as mutually exclusive—ambition the province of the businessmen, virtue the province of the intellectuals. This view of America took hold so strongly among intellectuals because of their historically low social and economic rank in this country. "In America," he says, "everything was, or seemed to be, run by businessmen. Intellectuals had no status, no power, no money. . . . Intellectuals were ridiculed and despised. They were impractical. They were effeminate." They got their revenge "by developing a critique of America as a country in the grip of false and corrupting values. . . in addition to being moneygrubbing and materialistic, it lacked any civilized graces. . . . What else did one expect when it was dominated by businessmen and run entirely for their benefit?"

In his "radical" days, Podhoretz himself partook of this view; in fact, his radicalism grew not so much out of any political agenda (he was unwaveringly hostile to Communism, and felt solving poverty and racism were "a mopping up operation, nothing more") as out of a feeling that American life was somehow spiritually and intellectually deadening. At the center of what he objected to was the idea of ambition. He quotes his earlier self complaining "that our society still lives by success, conceived in terms of status or money, and that the pursuit of success encourages the development of the worst human qualities and strangles the best."

When he changed his politics, it was on this point, rather than any particular policy, that Podhoretz changed most dramatically. He broke ranks in several ways in the mid-sixties, but the clearest break came in 1967 when he published *Making It* and thereby went on record as believing that success—and by extension a society in

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which its pursuit is central—is okay. Not only that, he said intellectuals wanted success no less than businessmen; he called this their "dirty little secret" and said "there was nothing in it to be ashamed of. The old idea that the pursuit of success was corrupting in itself may once have been largely valid, but things had changed in America to the point where this was no longer automatically or necessarily the case."

From then on—spurred on, no doubt, by the vicious critical response to *Making It*—Podhoretz became extremely annoyed with people who did not come forward and admit that what drove them was ambition. Indeed, anyone who claimed to represent the interest of virtue, rather than of self-advancement, came to annoy him; if you claimed that the dirty little secret was not at the center of your soul, you were not to be trusted. Thus he particularly disliked Southern writers in New York for their "hypocrisy about ambition" (they had it but didn't talk about it). They weren't the only villains; there were also "people" who "went around with straight faces saying of themselves that they, as opposed to most others around them, cared only for higher things and nobler values. Unlike everyone else, they believed in peace and justice as the proper ends of politics; unlike everyone else, they believed in love and cooperation instead of hatred and competition; and unlike everyone else they believed in art as against commerce."

So when the left attacked "the competition for money and privilege" in America, the neoconservatives, Podhoretz says, saw that what was really going on was "a 'New Class' of educated, prosperous people, members of the professional and technical intelligentsia, making a serious bid to dislodge and replace the business and commercial class which had on the whole dominated the country for nearly a century now."

The objection might be raised that Podhoretz himself, despite admitting his ambition and endorsing success, still claims to represent the correct and virtuous side in his political views. His answer to that is to propose a "politics of interest" in which everyone's political views are unabashedly those that will best serve themselves and the groups to which they belong—in Podhoretz's case Jews and intellectuals, in other people's case other groups, but with no one claiming to represent what's right for everyone. "The politics of interest," he says, "promises neither salvation nor the experience of spiritual transcendence that radicalism pretends to offer. . . . What I am trying to say is that if the politics of interest goes beyond individual selfishness in embracing the claims of family, community, and group, it also embodies and simultaneously broadens into an instrument of political liberty."

Covering Up Virtue

I think Podhoretz is right in saying that ambition and the desire for success are practically universal in American life. If there is such a thing as the American character as distinct from the human character, ambition is much of what distinguishes it. It's Podhoretz's next step—that if everyone is ambitious, no one is virtuous—that's wrong. Podhoretz's annoyance at New York liberals who claim to be virtuous presumes that the people Out There make no such claims. Well, the fact is that Podhoretz hasn't been Out There lately, and they do. His vision of a country that's dog-eat-dog and, by God, mighty proud of it is as one-dimensional as the view of the intellectuals about whom he complains so bitterly. In other words, the neoconservatives have bought the old picture and just changed the moral judgment of it.

A good way to start explaining why that picture is wrong is to go back to *Babbitt*.

On rereading, *Babbitt* is not completely the hatchet job it's remembered as. Lewis obviously was confused (and this is the book's failing as a work of fiction) about what to do with his hero. He starts by presenting George Babbitt as a perfect specimen of flat bourgeois American culture; that makes him journalistically interesting but not a compelling main character in a novel. So Lewis first turns him into a great success; then fills him with disaffection, so it is the culture and not he that is the villain; then has him rejoining the mainstream; then ends with a scene of feeble resentment against it. All this serves not only to give the novel some action, but also, perhaps, to reflect the reality: no one is truly a Babbitt.

Like most Americans, George Babbitt

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acts mostly out of economic self-interest but feels vaguely bad about it; in his stumbling and thickheaded way, he longs to impute broader virtue to himself. "Trouble with a lot of folks," he tells his son, "is: they're so blame material; they don't see the spiritual and mental side of American supremacy... they think these mechanical improvements are all that we stand for; whereas to a real thinker, he sees that spiritual and, uh, dominating movements like Efficiency, and Rotarianism, and Prohibition, and Democracy are what compose our deepest and truest wealth." He also feels bad about the unproductive nature of his work. "Wish I'd been a pioneer, same as my grand-dad," he muses to himself at one point. "But then I wouldn't have a house like this. I—Oh, gosh, *I don't know!*"

The Radicals Confess

The presence of these inchoate notions is the source of the power of intellectuals, people (like Podhoretz) who can think things through more deeply and promulgate systems of ideas that either justify to the Babbitts what they are already doing or impel them in a different direction. Usually, they justify, but that doesn't mean the need for them isn't deeply felt. George Babbitt's next-door neighbor is a 1920s neoconservative, Howard Littlefield, Ph.D., "the employment-manager and publicity-counsel of the Zenith Street Traction Company," and a man of great learning. He is much loved by Babbitt because he can provide in a way that sounds convincing the longed-for connection between his life and the path of virtue: "He confirmed the businessmen in their faith. Where they know only by passionate instinct that their system of industry and manners was perfect, Dr. Howard Littlefield proved it to them, out of history, economics, and the confessions of reformed radicals."

Even today the Dr. Littlefields of the world are paid handsomely to tell businessmen that what they're doing is good and right. That's because, Podhoretz to the contrary, it's in human nature to have a vague sense that virtue exists, and to see that sometimes it overlaps with ambition and sometimes it does not, and to want to behave virtuously. I spent most of last summer riding around the suburbs of Dallas, Texas in a big gray Cadillac with a realtor who was younger, smarter, and richer than George Babbitt, but still bedeviled by some of the same doubts. He made a sumptuous living persuading people to buy real estate at inflated prices, but he spoke constantly of grander aspirations: to be mayor of Dallas one day, to do mall deals instead of shopping center deals, to give a million dollars to the Campus Crusade for Christ. To be sure, he wouldn't have let anything stand in the way of his being a rich big shot, but he also badly wanted to do something that would leave the world in what he saw as better shape.

This impulse toward virtue is easy for the neoconservatives to approve of when it's manifested in people's personal lives, in the "claims of family, community, and group" embraced by Podhoretz. He would have no hesitancy about drawing a distinction between, say, someone who attended to his or her children and someone who ignored them.

But in politics, the impulse immediately becomes suspect. There, the neoconservative position is that if everyone acts selfishly we'll have a perfect free market that will produce abundance without restricting freedom; whereas political actions taken in the name of virtue tend to make for less abundance, less freedom, and more power for government bureaucrats. There's an emotional revulsion against reformers in this position, and it means that, no less than the sneering liberals, the neoconservatives shy away from making moral distinctions among the activities of businessmen. To the liberals, it's all selfish and therefore bad; to the neoconservatives, it's all selfish and therefore good by virtue of its refreshing lack of hypocrisy.

From the nature of the defense, you get the sense that it's not so much love of business as hatred of the other side in the intellectual battles that spurs on the neoconservatives. You can't help feeling, in reading the neoconservative literature, that these people at bottom are neither familiar nor comfortable with—in fact, they feel superior to—the real businessman. Here, for instance, is Peter Witonski, a prominent neoconservative-about-Washington, writing in *Politics Today* of his vague embarrassment about

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Ronald Reagan: "Ronald Reagan to the contrary, no serious American thinker today views conservatism as an anti-intellectual movement. . . . His approach simply does not fit in with that of the new policy-oriented conservatism." In this attitude is the idea that what's really important about neoconservatism is not its ideas but its sophistication. It does not, as Witonski says Reagan does, use "a compendium of the kind of Chamber of Commerce rhetoric that the late George Babbitt used to inflict upon his fellow Rotarians in Zenith."

Making Distinctions

As a result, neoconservatives are reluctant to get down in the muck and figure out which activities of business really are virtuous and which are not. It's the attitude that, in the business schools, makes the best students want to be management consultants, an expert's job that keeps you from being really *of* business. In your typical neoconservative household, mom and dad want their kids to be lawyers, not to run factories.

Intellectuals could view business entirely differently; consider the way they approach a world they really do know intimately, the arts. Nobody would be so naive as to argue the case for or against the arts per se, or to say that all of what painters or writers or actors do is either good or bad. There's an assumption that, first, people get involved in the arts for the joy of performing a truly creative function and that, second, it is of the utmost importance constantly to judge the quality of their output. Podhoretz's good friend Hilton Kramer, the art critic, wouldn't dream of arguing that it's snobbish and hypocritical to attack Walter Keane, painter of lovable wide-eyed moppets, even though Keane's work sells extremely well. Making such judgments about painters is Kramer's job, and one that he cares about passionately and does well. No doubt he hopes his criticism will spur young artists on toward working in the best direction.

The same room for distinctions and judgments exists in business. Let's say, for example, you're my friend the realtor in Dallas. You might spend the next six months putting together an investor group to speculate in raw land, intending to resell it quickly for a big profit. Doing this would take plenty of work, and it would yield substantial economic returns, in proportion to risk. You'd have to figure out where the city was going to grow, and talk the people in that area into selling, and convince your investors to take the plunge. But you wouldn't be doing anything productive.

Or, you might spend the same time putting together an investor group to build a new housing development, an endeavor that would take the same amount of work and selling and risk. Except in this case, you might also create a tangible result in which, if you did everything right, you felt great creative pride. You might also have created jobs and housing for people who needed them. You might have felt a pure sense of joy in working with the investors and architects and contractors, coming from your shared goals and your pride in what you were building. This feeling might be so strong and so rewarding that the importance of the profit might recede in your mind.

The trouble is, there's nobody telling my friend that there's a difference between these two courses. Roughly, the influences on him, outside of the profit motive, are these: there's the religious influence, represented by people like Dr. Bill Bright, the head of the Campus Crusade, whose message is to make as much money as possible so you can then redeem yourself by giving it to Jesus; and there's the political influence, represented by my friend's congressman, Jim Collins, whose message is to make as much money as possible because you're part of the free enterprise system.

If my friend were, instead, a Broadway producer—a job that requires many of the same skills—you can be sure he'd want desperately to put on a quality show, not just because of his inner drive, but because he'd know that his results would be harshly judged on their quality. But he's just a businessman. Nobody assumes there's any joy or creativity in what he does, and therefore nobody tries to steer him, through vigorous criticism, toward the more productive parts of his work and away from the less productive. The Podhoretzes of the world could be doing that, but they aren't; perhaps that's because in their eyes he's really just a Babbitt after all. ■

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Memo of the Month

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 18, 1979

SUBJECT: Lunch and Work Breaks

FROM: S.G. Jaros, Task V Supervisor (Acting) SGJ

TO: All Task V Employees

I would like to remind Task V personnel that their allotted break time is as follows:

- 30 minutes for lunch (1200 - 1230 hours)
- 15 minutes for pre-lunch break (approximately at mid-point)
- 15 minutes for post-lunch break (approximately at mid-point)

You may choose to give up your 15 minute breaks and instead take an hour for lunch (1200 -1300 hours). If so, this precludes your leaving the building/eating during your pre/post lunch work time. Also, eating is permitted only during your pre/post lunch breaks if you choose to take same - this is inclusive of breakfast!

Although I will rely on those task members (V. Brock, C. Henson, H. Kirk, and G. Torre) who have a supervisory role for the enforcement of this policy, it is each task member's responsibility for adherence to same.

Your cooperation is appreciated.

cc: Personnel Dept.
file

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Where to stay in Washington

Hotel Hill

People don't think of Washington as a city of hills, but it is. Just north of Dupont Circle, Connecticut Avenue clambers steeply up a hill before vaulting across the canyon called Rock Creek Park. Flanking the avenue are four hillside hotels—each with different personalities, prices, pros and cons.

They're all within a five-minute walk of the Dupont Circle Metro stop. On a good day, when everything's functioning, the subway will take you swiftly to the Capitol, the Mall, the Pentagon, National Airport, Foggy Bottom, RFK stadium. . . and next year, the zoo (when the new link in the system opens). One drawback: at the end of a long day, it can be more than a five-minute walk up Hotel Hill for the footsore traveler.

This is a pleasant part of town, less starchy than the downtown business district. Many restaurants are within walking distance, with prices reflecting neighborhood trade, not the downtown credit-card crowd. There's regular limousine service between the Hilton and both National and Dulles airports, a convenience for guests at all the hotels on the hill.

The Washington Hilton, 1919 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., (202) 483-3000. If you're coming to Washington for a convention, odds are good that you'll be staying here (don't confuse the Washington Hilton with the older, smaller Capital Hilton on K Street downtown). The hotel has an enormous (4,000-seat), fully equipped ballroom in addition to 33 smaller function rooms and an exhibit hall. Convention facilities have recently been spruced up at a cost of roughly $1 million, and plans are afoot for expansion of the 1,165-room hotel. When you're not in a meeting, there's plenty to keep you busy without leaving the building: Start on the tennis courts (open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., March to December); then jog nine times around the terrace to log a mile; then take a swim in the outdoor pool. Relax in your room overlooking Washington; take a nap—you'll have no trouble dropping off if you read a few pages of the hotel's complimentary paperback about the inspiring career of Conrad Hilton. Then you can browse through the gift shop and boutique, drop in at the Racquet Club (free to guests) for a sauna, check out the hair salon and drop by the piano bar for cocktails. There's dancing at Ashby's until 1 a.m., when you can return to your room for the last showing of the closed-circuit movies on TV (your choice of R or PG for $4.95).

If you're really dedicated to staying in the hotel, you can take all your meals at one of the Hilton's restaurants: **Ashby's**—attractive, with expensive continental/American food; **The Colonials,** a pleasant three-meals-daily coffee shop with moderate prices and a no-smoking section; and, on a warm day, the **Gazebo** for a light meal on the terrace.

The better the view, the larger the room, and the closer to the elevator, the higher the price. Singles are $58-$90; doubles, $76-$108; additional persons in room, $18. There are nearly 150 suites, with 93 priced at $188, the rest soaring as high as $333. Children sharing a room with parents are free, any age. There's a "Rainbow Weekend" package: Single, $105.25; double, $77.25 per person. The price covers two nights, a welcome basket, two breakfasts, taxes and gratuities. On this plan, children are free but their breakfast isn't. Indoor parking available at $4.50 per night.

The Highland Hotel, 1914 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., (800) 424-2464 or (202) 797-2000. Walk across the street from the hustling Hilton and you'll find yourself in a very different world. Built as an apartment building in the grand style of the early 1900s, the 141-room Highland has been comprehensively but carefully overhauled, preserving the flavor of the original: a lobby of chandeliers, mirrors, and red carpeting; elaborately carved moldings and cornices; rooms with high ceilings; bathrooms with marble walls. Three-room suites abound, each with separate sleeping and living rooms, a TV in each, and a wet bar (formerly the apartment's kitchen) with table and chairs; but even the regular guest rooms have a wet bar, thanks to the hotel's previous incarnation. Within a year, the hotel plans to open a restaurant, but for now the only food service is an overpriced continental breakfast ($4.50, including a copy of *The Washington Post*). The hotel has three conference rooms available for small meetings. Room prices: Singles, $54-$72; doubles, $66-$84; suites, $108-$225. Additional persons in room, $12 each; children under 12 free. Group, diplomatic, and long-term (six-month minimum) rates available. Parking next door is available for $4.50 per night.

Holiday Inn, 1900 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., (800) 238-8000 or (202) 332-9300. The management here has gone bonkers, providing a complimentary balloon on every pillow, in every ice bucket, and on every. . . toilet seat. Everything else, however, is strictly in line with what you'd expect to find in a hotel run by the chain that used to claim "the best surprise is no surprise at all." Rooms are blandly com-

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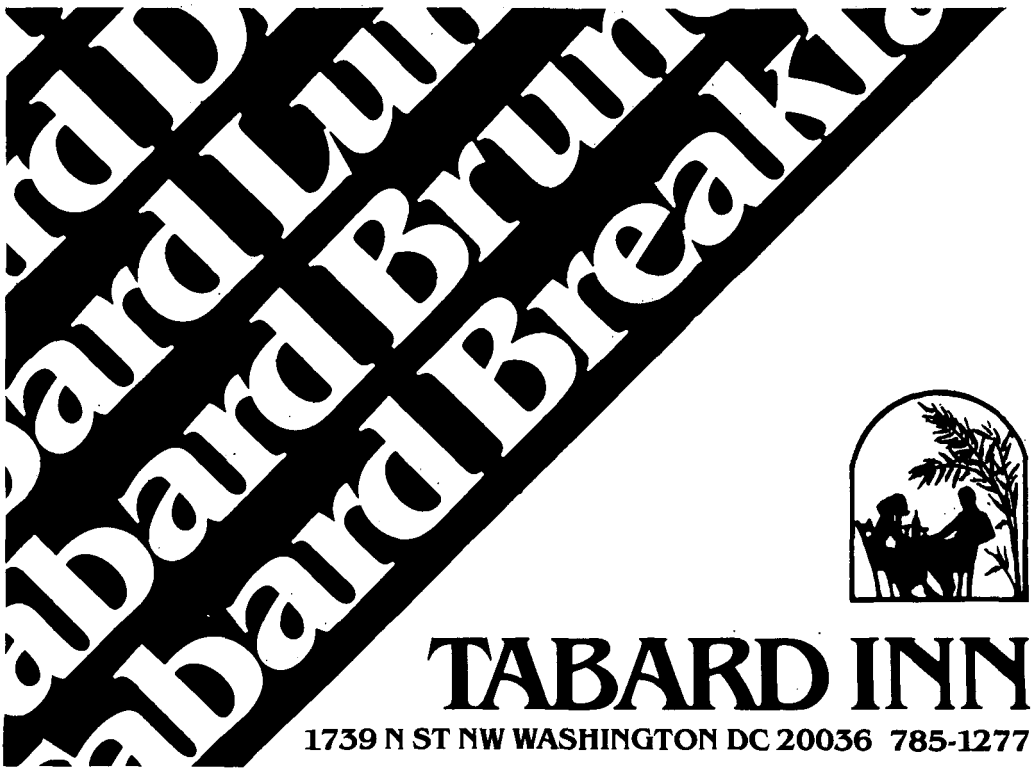
fortable—and the prices are better than the competition's. There's free indoor parking; an outdoor pool, terrace, and cafe in season; a laundromat; and the rooms come equipped with a safe, a clock-radio in addition to the TV, and a shower-massage. The lobby lounge offers a six-foot TV screen, dart board, electronic games, and free hors d'oeuvres from 5 to 7 p.m. **Pipers,** the restaurant, has a moderately priced coffee shop menu for all three meals, and provides room service. There are 149 rooms: Single, $41; double, $45; "King Leisure" (king-sized bed plus sitting area) for $55, single, and $60, double. Additional persons in room, $5 each; children under 12 and pets free. Group and government rates are available.

The Normandy Inn, 2118 Wyoming Avenue, N.W., (202) 483-1350. To really get away from the hustle-bustle, you need walk only two blocks north on Connecticut and turn left on Wyoming, where the 78-room Normandy Inn sits quietly among the embassies, apartment buildings, and private homes. Newly renovated, it offers few extras—you have to send your laundry out, and there's no restaurant (continental breakfast available). The rooms are small but pleasant, and most have refrigerators. For the price it's nice: Singles, $39; doubles, $46; suites (there are only four), $100; additional persons, $10 each; children under 13 free. Group rates available. Parking is $3 a night but space is limited.

Restaurants

Even if you're staying in a restaurant-equipped hotel, you should make a point of going out for at least a meal or two to take advantage of your location. Washington isn't known for its ethnic neighborhoods, but you're on the edge of the next best thing to a melting pot. Within a short walk, you can choose from Latin American, African, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Indian, and Greek food. And in most of these restaurants you'll find it hard to spend more than $10 per person.

Omega, at 1858 Columbia Road, is the oldest and best bargain-priced Cuban restaurant in town (as confirmed by the line at the door). A few doors away is **El Caribe,** 1828 Columbia Road, a bit more fancy and expensive but still good and just as noisy. Indian cuisine is well-represented by **Gaylord's,** 1731 Connecticut Avenue; **Star of India,** 2100 Connecticut Avenue; and **Paru's,** 2010 S St., very informal, vegetarian. Two new places gaining reputations for authentic African dishes are **Baobab,** 2106 18th St. (West African) and **Axum,** 2307 18th St. (Ethiopian). If all this is too spicy for you, try **Timberlake's,** 1726 Connecticut, a noisy, amiable, brick-and-wood pub where you can get an energetic sandwich or quiche; or **Nora's,** 2132 Florida Avenue, for good fish and chicken dishes with fresh homemade trimmings. And vegetarians shouldn't miss the **Golden Temple**'s salad-and-baked-potato bar at 1521 Connecticut.



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TEACHING COLLEGES A LESSON

by Robert M. Kaus

Two months ago we published an article by Peter Engel criticizing the new "core curriculum" of Harvard College. We ran the piece not only because Harvard's heralded reform has turned out to be a flop, even a fraud, but because the reasons it turned out that way lie at the heart of what is wrong with our colleges. Harvard may be more prone than most schools to stentorian self-congratulation in the wake of failure ("The first successful effort in 20 years to establish a new consensus on general education priorities" was how one Harvard dean described the new curriculum). But at no major American university of which we are aware have any but the most preliminary steps been taken in the direction of guaranteeing every student the basic knowledge and experience that a liberal education is supposed to provide. Many have opted for a version of the Harvard solution, though on a smaller public relations budget. At others, including Yale, Berkeley, and Princeton, more significant reforms never got past the faculty. It's a spectacle that led us to think about what steps, beyond curricular gimmickry, would be necessary to restore the college experience as a vital and valuable part of our, and our children's, lives.

Robert M. Kaus is an editor of The Washington Monthly.

A FUNDAMENTALIST REVIVAL

The battle lines of "higher education," at least in this century, have been drawn between two opposing camps: those who advocated a rigorous program of required courses, in a sort of academic fundamentalism, and those who would have agreed with Harvard president Charles W. Eliot, the 19th-century pioneer of the "elective" system, when he proclaimed himself "a complete skeptic as to the necessity of any subject whatever as an element in the education of a gentleman and a scholar."

It has not, however, been much of a battle—it's been a rout. The three fundamentalist assaults on the skeptical fortress—Columbia's in the twenties, St. John's and Chicago's in the thirties, and Harvard's under James Conant in the forties—have left few traces we can discern today. The Columbia and Chicago

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programs never caught on nationally, and they are (with the isolated exception of St. John's) a mere shadow of their former selves even at the original institutions. Conant's "general education" formula was widely adopted at campuses across the land, but it dissolved in the liberalization wave of the early sixties.

Today, the pendulum is supposed to be swinging back—away from the "do-your-own-thing," toward "a solid and shared base" of knowledge; away from specialization, toward "general education"; away from jobs, toward "values." But it isn't happening. The fundamentalists, after nursing their discontent with the "permissiveness" of the sixties, arrived at their historical moment and promptly surrendered. The pendulum carves out tinier and tinier arcs. Soon it will be frozen.

Harvard's dean Henry Rosovsky, the Lee Iacocca of this slumping educational establishment, has already pronounced his stern judgment on the idea of required courses in the "great works" of Western thought, art, and literature. "We used to teach these broad survey courses," Rosovsky noted recently. "It was a valid vision for the time, but the world has changed—there is just too much information." This "knowledge explosion" is the official explanation for why "core curricula" like Harvard's aren't core curricula at all, but loose grab bags of specialized courses from which the undergraduate is forced to choose. As late as 1945, according to this official version, teachers might have been able to agree on which subjects were important because there was so little knowledge around for them to choose from. But no longer. A veritable landslide of learning has tripped the circuits, and reasonable men, college professors included, are simply incapable of distinguishing the essential from the merely useful.

What rot. Does anybody, even Rosovsky himself, really subscribe to this paralyzing relativism? There have been many books published since 1945, true—but do we stand immobile in front of the shelves because we can't decide which of the thousands of titles to pluck first? A decision may be difficult; my list of readings will differ from yours. That doesn't mean we must give up the enterprise, any more than we should refuse to build a building because we disagreed as to the exact number of windows we wanted.

> Why make a physicist read Aristotle? Because, while not all citizens are physicists, all physicists are citizens.

And let's not get carried away with the difficulties of drawing up reading lists. A list of the 100 greatest works of literature might generate some controversy over whether, say, *The Red and the Black* should be number 35, 83, or left off the charts entirely. There are, however, two or three dozen books that would make everybody's list. They are the unquestioned monuments of thought and art that each succeeding generation has read and responded to. A college diploma, at the least, should mean coming to grips with these efforts.

So the first step toward revitalizing our colleges is to admit that the fundamentalists, with their lists of "Great Books" and courses on "Western Thought," had the right idea. A glance at the Columbia catalog from 1930, or a "general education" reading list from 1947, is a breath of fresh air. Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Dante, Milton, Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Voltaire, Luther, Goethe, Descartes, Kant, Dickens, Rousseau, Locke, Smith, Bentham, Mill, Marx, Tolstoy. Was their value destroyed in some post-industrial "knowledge explosion?" Or were the fundamentalists, unlike Dean Rosovsky, simply willing to decide what was important and make sure that their students learned it?

There are a number of objections to their approach, of course, aside from Rosovskian apologism. The first is the "libertarian" objection: the complaint that, by requiring specific courses, colleges are telling students what to read. Quite true. But colleges impose requirements every

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day, from the rule that students must learn how to write, to the vague "distribution" quotas that pass for "general education" programs on nearly all American campuses. Such requirements do not eliminate student choice, they merely shift the moment of choice from the filling-out of the course card to the decision on whether or not to go to a particular college.

A second set of objections stresses the links between college and the job market. Students do not have the choice of rejecting a college, the argument goes, because an impressive college diploma is a necessary (if insufficient) condition for getting a good job. And isn't it ridiculous to force the budding physicist, who may be a few years away from a contribution to science or industry, to sweat through Adam Smith or *Madame Bovary*?

But these complaints assume that the role of college is to prepare people for jobs, a task that colleges perform particularly poorly. (If they did the job well, 67 per cent of our BAs wouldn't need to go on to professional schools to learn a marketable skill.) When it comes to filling job slots, as James Fallows argues on page 9, there are better, and fairer, ways to do it than by requiring a show of baccalaureates. A heart surgeon needs to know how to cut people open; an engineer how to design a bridge that won't collapse. That either of them has read *Moby Dick* is at best a secondary qualification. Even writing, the one skill that colleges are universally expected to impart, could undoubtedly be taught more effectively than by a four-year program costing upwards of $50,000 per pupil.

What colleges do well has less to do with particular job skills, and more to do with our universal attributes as citizens and human beings. The justification for having the physicist read Aristotle, Adam Smith, or Samuel Eliot Morison is that, while not all citizens are physicists, all physicists are citizens. It is virtually impossible, for instance, to reach a sensible decision on most political questions today without at least a rudimentary knowledge of the way the economic marketplace is supposed to work (and the ways it doesn't). Similarly, it helps to know how our ancestors tried to solve the problems they faced, and how well they fared. To pick one example, I doubt that anyone familiar with the history of the *Dred Scott* decision would put much stock in the ability of a carefully tailored judicial compromise to lay to rest a powerful moral issue like abortion. Nor, as Fallows has argued ("The President and The Press," *The Washington Monthly*, October 1979) would the press have reacted so hysterically to Carter's dismissal of four cabinet secretaries if it had recognized the numerous instances in our history when similar firings had occurred without noticeable damage to the republic.

That takes care of Aristotle, Smith, and Morison. But what about *Madame Bovary* and *Moby Dick*? Here the connection with citizenship is vague at best—neither the physicist nor the physicist/citizen *needs* Flaubert or Melville. We must move up another notch in abstraction to find their proper place—to the goal, quite simply, of making us better human beings. There are, it seems to me, at least three main ways a classical liberal arts program can help us achieve this end. The first is through the pure aesthetic pleasure of being able to enjoy a great work of literature, a great painting, a great piece of music. The second is the way shared readings enrich our common language, our ability to refer to Sisyphus or Doctor Pangloss and instantly have many minds know what is being discussed.

The third aspect is revealed in the striking fact that two of the three "general education" movements have followed major wars. It is a coincidence that another famous doctor might have explained by drawing a parallel between war and hanging. In wartime, people begin to think seriously about dying, and they naturally tend to ask themselves *what for*. The bulk of the "great books" that were chosen by the postwar reformers were the works that people throughout history have found useful in answering that question.

TEACHERS WHO TEACH

It is no secret why a mandatory, basic curriculum doesn't exist except at a few holdout colleges. It's not because any "knowledge explosion" has made it impossible to draw up a reading list. It has little to do with respect for students'

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freedom of choice. Today's undergraduates are taught what they are taught because the faculties don't want to teach anything else—and the faculties, almost without exception, run our colleges. Even in a state system like the University of California, it is the professors, and not the college administrators, who decide what courses are offered and which, if any, required.

This system of university government has come to parody the worst excesses of parochialism that are now universally descried in the national government. The ruling faculties are formally organized by specialty into powerful lobbies, called departments. From the day he enters graduate school, the aspiring professor is taught that his future lies with his specialty. If he stakes out an obscure corner of his field and produces a bit of original research, he may impress his department and land a job as an assistant professor. If he then impresses his departmental peers, he has a shot at tenure. Once tenured, he can move to a bigger, more prestigious university, again by catching the eye of his fellow specialists. At each stage, his loyalties are directed, not to the students whom he is supposed to be teaching, or to the institution that pays his salary, but to his department and the discipline it represents.

As a result, when some brave soul proposes a modest plan for "general education" that would require professors to spend time teaching outside their specialties (to undergraduates, yet) the faculty will either vote it down (Yale, Princeton), water it down (Harvard, Amherst, Berkeley) or simply refuse to teach it. Stanford, which recently decided to adopt a mild version of the Columbia approach, found it could offer only a handful of "Western Culture" seminars due to lack of interested faculty. (In that, too, Stanford followed Columbia—where, as a professor told our reporter two months ago, "The first thing you try to do when you get tenure is to 'liberate' yourself from teaching C.C. [the required freshman course on Contemporary Civilization].")

There is only one solution to this problem: It is to break the power of the faculties. In terms of brute economic

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power, that should not be impossible. Faculty prerogatives became entrenched during the fifties and sixties, when professors were in demand and enrollments were growing; today, enrollment is plummeting and each faculty vacancy attracts hundreds of applicants. The more important problem may be that decreased faculty power means increased administrator power—and college administrators, for good reason, have a bad reputation. Increasingly, we find that the leaders of higher education are fund-raisers, grant-getters, or interest-brokers instead of scholars with a coherent plan for teaching—a reality we tend to contrast with the lingering fantasy of the faculty as a sort of collective Mr. Chips.

But it hasn't always been so. Most of the great innovations in American higher education have come through the efforts of visionary administrators—men like Robert Hutchins of Chicago, Scott Buchanan of St. John's, or Conant of Harvard. We need to put those among us with equal vision in charge of what gets taught in our colleges. Leaving the decision up to the faculty is like leaving the size and distribution of the federal budget up to a committee composed of the 50 most powerful lobbyists in Washington.

THINKING

Try and recall all the young people you know who graduated from fancy colleges and then went on to law school in order, they said, to "hone their minds," to "learn how to think." What, you may have asked, had these kids been doing for four years of undergraduate instruction if not learning to think? Yet there they were, in record numbers this past decade, signing up for an extra three-year tour of duty—not necessarily out of a burning desire to join the bar, but because they felt they had to get rid of what John Houseman in *The Paper Chase* called their "skulls full of mush." More recently, college BAs have been flocking to the business schools, as well as the law schools, in their attempts to cure this defect.

These people aren't crazy. The best law and business schools do seem to offer at least two things, aside from another credential, that colleges don't. The first is the premium they place on critical thinking, on the willingness to seek out and probe the sore points of an argument. It's a willingness that is surprisingly rare in the mannered fellowship-of-scholars ambience of academe. But it pervades the confrontational atmosphere that marks a typical law or business school class. The people turned out by that process are often egotistical, contentious paranoids. But they have also been trained to think about the implications of what they are saying, to pick out unsubstantiated links in an argument, to recognize phony invocations of authority. If there is a legitimate excuse for the infiltration of lawyers into all levels of state and corporate government, it is this critical ability.

It is not an ability, however, that can be taught only in a course on Torts, Corporations, or Constitutional Law, or only to students who have already spent almost half a decade in college. A growing number of college teachers realize this, and are struggling to push courses on "Critical Thinking" or "Informal Logic" through their turf-obsessed faculties. (When American University professor Alan Lichtman proposed to teach a course on "How to Think," an angry colleague asked him "Why don't you teach them how to breathe next?") But if colleges were really doing their jobs, the students' critical faculties would be honed in every course—be it Renaissance Art, American History, or Economics. Then they would go on to law school if and only if they wanted to become lawyers, not because they needed to learn how to think.

REAL PROBLEMS

This is the second great virtue of the law and business schools—their use of the "case method." The first-year student poring over *Brown vs. Board of Education* doesn't have to stretch to see why what he's studying is important to him. As a lawyer,

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and as a citizen, he is bound to confront the aftershocks of that decision and the monumental social problem it tried to solve. The focus on a particular problem crystallizes the abstract theories under discussion, in a way that engages his attention and emotions—which is why an average law school class is considerably more entertaining than all but the most spectacular college lecture.

It is also why the best business schools, where cases and precedent have no special technical significance, also employ a version of the case method. Instead of plowing over an abstract text setting forth the principles of finance or inventory control, the classes at these schools discuss concrete problems: Company X was faced in 1967 with depleted capital, excessive inventory in product A, and an inefficient plant in product B. What did it do? Did its strategy work? What *should* it have done? The principles of finance come out, but in the context of a real problem and a real attempt by someone to deal with it.

It wouldn't take a tremendous feat of the professorial imagination to make undergraduate subjects relevant in the same way to the future lives of students. Yes, I used the word "relevant." I do it with some fear, because in the sixties, when "relevance" was used to justify courses on everything from "medical ethics" to "auto mechanics," the concept got a bad name. By "relevance" I mean not bowing to passing fads, or substituting application for theory, but replacing the typical "welcome to my specialty" atmosphere of college courses with a recognition that knowledge is important only if it helps us solve the problems we face.

A case method is a powerful means of making this connection when it focuses on past attempts to resolve the dilemmas that still confound us. Our society has not yet discovered, for example, the way to achieve a growing economy, full employment, and a moderate inflation rate. For the period from 1940 to 1950, however, we managed to do just that. Why? The first five years of prosperity were fueled by wartime spending. But not the boom from 1945-1950, during which defense spending sank rapidly. Yet in 1949, at the end of this period of unprecedented material growth, the rate of inflation was *minus* 1.8 per cent. Attempting to account for this achievement would make the theories of Smith and Keynes, Samuelson and Galbraith, come to life. In the same manner, we might learn from failure, by contrasting, for example, the relative success of the West German and Japanese auto and steel industries with the decline of our own. (For some other possible "cases" in other areas, see the box on page 56.)

Such contrasts—between success and failure, war and peace, theory and practice—serve a dual function. Because they present a true riddle, they suppress the temptation to grasp simple solutions on the basis of a single event. And because they pull together a variety of historical examples, they steer the student away from an antiquarian interest in the study of those events for their own sake, and toward the common problem they raise. If you study only the Vietnam war—the archetypal object of sixties "relevance"—it is easy to steep yourself in the comfortable condemnation of America's imperialist excesses. But combine "the lessons of Vietnam" with "the lessons of Munich" and you have also raised the persistent dilemma of appeasement, and with it the question of how the U.S. should behave in the world today, and in the future.

STUDENTS WHO WANT TO STUDY

For most of this century, American colleges have managed to associate the goal of universal higher education with the ideals of equal opportunity and economic equality. In this vision of things, the baccalaureate is seen as something like a Eurailpass, a go-anywhere ticket to the career market. If every child, rich or poor, could only spend four years getting this mobility certificate before he was forced out into the working world, the riches of capitalism would be distributed fairly.

It hasn't worked out that way, of course. It hasn't worked out because the ascendance of the college diploma as the universal credential, while it has undoubtedly provided an escape route for many an individual trapped in poverty, has also had the effect of placing another barrier between the poor and their potential jobs. Once colleges have set themselves up as the

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central ticket-issuers of society, then even if you only want to go as far as Cleveland you are expected to brandish the full four-year pass. Since the poor inevitably find themselves unable to chase after this talisman with the same ease as the rich, they drop out, or go to two-year schools—and the degree that was supposed to be their ticket to success becomes the ticket they haven't got.

In response, of course, the colleges and their lobbyists argue that, if only more money were available for scholarships, then at last every youth could have his opportunity to win their seal of approval. But the more the ideal of universal college education is achieved, the more the competition for credentials shifts to the post-collegiate arena of professional and graduate schools. Like the peep show patron who is told he must buy a second ticket if he wants to get in the room with the really dirty films, the BA discovers that his degree doesn't carry him as far as he thought it would.

But the true genius of the system is that the things the college degree represents—a chance to become a better citizen and person—have only a vague connection with actual performance in actual jobs. It would be better both for our colleges and for the ideal of equal opportunity if we

THE CASE FOR CASES

Here are three examples of how a "case" method could help focus the minds of college students on the problems they will face in their lives:

• *Munich and Vietnam*: If the events leading up to the Munich conference in 1938 illustrate the danger of appeasement, as they do, Vietnam demonstrated the danger of a hasty and foolish drawing of lines. It is fair to say that this dilemma is still with us, and a careful study of these two seminal failures might help prevent a third. Readings would include Churchill's *The Gathering Storm,* George Kennan's "X" article, David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest, The Pentagon Papers,* Daniel Ellsberg's "The Stalemate Machine," as well as testimony on the reality of war from Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage,* Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms,* Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* the Peers report on My Lai, and John Hersey's *Hiroshima.*

• To anyone who wants our government to work, few contrasts could be more informative than the juxtaposition of the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 with the successful resolution of the Cuban missile crisis by a wiser president 18 months later. For the Bay of Pigs, students would start with Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s excellent account in *A Thousand Days* and Peter Wyden's more recent book on the subject. The best books on the Cuban missile crisis remain Graham Allison's *The Essence of Decision* and David Detzer's *Brink.*

• As to questions closer to the life of the average undergraduate, one of the continuing issues is surely whether to get out of bed in the morning—or at least by early afternoon. A reading list addressed to this problem could start with Kafka's *The Trial* and *The Castle,* and continue on through *Hamlet,* Dante's *Purgatorio,* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote,* exploring the various reasons for and against.

The point is not that each of these problems should fill a semester of college work. Students could fruitfully spend as little as a week on some of them, and as much as a year on others. And they could do just that, if we organized our colleges around the goal of producing better citizens, and better human beings, rather than the job of dispensing a vague credential that at the bottom signifies little more than exposure to a hodgepodge of academic specialties.

—*Charles Peters*

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severed the artificial link between a liberal arts education and "getting a good job." Let the high-school graduate who wants to become a lawyer go ahead and learn how to be a lawyer—that's how they do it in Britain, and I've never heard anyone claim that British solicitors or barristers are hopelessly handicapped by their lack of a BA. Let the would-be engineer learn engineering. But let both of them get their jobs by proving their legal or engineering skills, not by writing term papers on Homer.

Only when we have removed the four-year BA as the *sine qua non* of real-world success can we free the colleges to do what they do best. This means, first, filling them with students who come to college because they want to learn. No number of great books, good teachers, or well-chosen "cases" will make a deep impression on an adolescent who finds himself in college because he was told he had to get a diploma before daring to tackle the "real world." On the contrary, the best students are likely to be those who have had a taste of "real world" experience, who realize, for example, that the conversations between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza aren't merely amusing passages, but examples of the running tension between idealism and a comfortable life that most of us face, every day. That is why you will repeatedly meet college professors who claim that the post-World War II generation of students, which entered college on the GI Bill after having been thrust for a few years into a very "real" world, was the best they ever taught.

Second, the ideal of universal access to higher education could be revived, freed from the expectation that it will guarantee equality in the contest for jobs. It won't. Instead, universal education is desirable precisely because it speaks to our universal qualities as citizens and human beings, not to our individual merits as breadwinners. We want engineers—and bank clerks as well—who have read and understood Plato and Dante. We can't force them, but we can give them the chance.

We have a plan to fulfill both these aims. Let the Congress establish a mechanism, in the spirit of the GI bill, to cover the cost of a "fundamentalist" college education for every citizen. Such an education need by no means consume a full four years, but however long it takes, let it be financed in full by the government. Unlike the GI bill, however, the costs of the plan should be borne, not by the taxpayers, but by the contributions of the students themselves. To cover roughly 85 per cent of his tuition, let the student take out a loan to be repaid by a fixed percentage tithe on his future earnings, up to a limit. (The limit could be set so that the contributions of the high-earners would offset the meager repayments of the low-earners.) This repayment feature alone should ensure that students who signed up for a loan would at least think carefully about whether they were ready to study.

But even the prospect of a future debt probably wouldn't prevent many high school graduates from marching straight through college simply because they dared not interrupt the parabolic trajectory of their careers with a descent into the world. To prevent students, particularly the affluent, from taking their grants for granted, the government should require a down payment, equal to the remaining 15 per cent of tuition, *and payable only from the student's own accumulated earnings.* Like the down payment on a house, this requirement would demonstrate that a student was willing to invest something in his choice—and it would encourage him to spend a bit of time outside of school earning the money to get back in.

■

In this system, a college degree would be neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of a successful, prosperous career for the vast majority of students. That, I think, would be all to the good. As James Fallows points out in this issue, we have given our colleges a lot of power to decide who in our society ends up where. Usually, we've done it in a search for equality and efficiency—but that hasn't been the result. By taking away some of our universities' life-determining power, we can open up our society again—and we can open up our colleges as well, to do the job they should be doing. The point is not to ask less of them. It is to ask more: that the fundamental lessons of our civilization be taught to students eager to study them by teachers eager to teach them, and applied with critical skill to the problems that confront us. ■

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Who's Who in the Carter Administration

When Jimmy Carter came to Washington he clearly didn't understand that the people who really run the government are the people at the sub-cabinet level—undersecretaries, assistant secretaries, bureau chiefs. A president who wants to control his administration has to fill these posts with people loyal to him. After the cabinet firings last summer, we thought Carter had finally learned his lesson. He hadn't. The showdown came between Carter and Energy Secretary **Charles Duncan** when Duncan held out for the right to appoint his own deputies. Duncan won, naming **William Lewis,** his former colleague at the Defense department, as Assistant Secretary for Policy. . . . Since then, former HUD officials have been following **Patricia Harris** to the department of Health and Human Resources, and associates of New Orleans mayor **Moon Landrieu** have been taking their place at HUD. . . . To whom does Carter think these people will owe their first allegiance—to him, or to the cabinet secretary who got them their job?

In

COMMERCE

Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade—**Robert Herzstein** was a partner in the Washington law firm of Arnold and Porter.

Assistant Secretary for Trade Development—**Herta Seidman** has been deputy commissioner for the New York State Department of Commerce.

DEFENSE

Undersecretary of the Army—**Robert Spiro, Jr.** has been president of Jacksonville University.

Undersecretary of the Navy—**Robert Murray** has been deputy assistant secretary of Defense for international security affairs.

EDUCATION

Assistant Secretary for Budget and Planning—**C. William Fisher** has been deputy administrator of the Energy Information Administration for the Department of Energy.

Assistant Secretary for Management—**John Gabusi** has been assistant director for community action of the Community Services Administration since 1977.

HUD

Assistant Secretary for Legislation and International Relations—**Dicken Cherry** has been director and city representative of New Orleans to the National Center for Municipal Development in Washington.

STATE

Ambassador to Hungary—**Harold E. Bergold, Jr.** has been assistant secretary of Energy for international affairs.

Ambassador to Austria—**Philip Kaiser** has been ambassador to Hungary.

TREASURY

Assistant Secretary for Economic Policy—**Curtis Hessler** has been associate director for natural resources and science at the Office of Management and Budget.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Federal Election Commission
General Counsel—**Charles Steele** has been associate general counsel.

Securities and Exchange Commission
Commissioner—**Stephen Friedman** has been deputy assistant secretary of the Treasury.

Out

White House
Associate Director, Office of Management and Budget—**Eliot Cutler** has resigned to return to the New York law firm of Webster, Sheffield, Fleischmann, Hitchcock & Brookfield.

Energy
Undersecretary—**John Deutch** is expected to return to a professorship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Health and Human Resources
General Counsel, Food and Drug Administration—**Richard Cooper** will join the law firm of Williams and Connolly in Washington, D.C.

Interior
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs—**Forrest Gerard** is starting his own consulting firm.

Securities and Exchange Commission
Commissioner—**Irving Pollack** will retire.

Commissioner—**Roberta Karmel** will return to the law firm of Rogers & Wells.

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Getting Off The Money $tandard

You have to swim against the cash flow...

by Philip Slater

We attach different kinds of meaning to our experiences and don't usually try to compare or equate them. We don't say "This sunset is worth three sets of tennis, one episode of *Starsky and Hutch,* and a banana split." Each experience produces not only a *degree* of pleasure, but a certain *kind* of pleasure, with special meanings attached. A grapefruit is not only *quantitatively* different from a grape in the sense of being bigger, but also *qualitatively* different: it has a different taste, texture, and so on. Money was created to enable us to eliminate these qualitative differences and compare anything with anything else on a single scale of value. There's an old saying about the folly of trying to compare apples and oranges, but this is precisely what money is for: if apples are 10 cents each and oranges are 20 cents each, then an orange is twice as good as an apple. This doesn't tell us much about the difference between *experiencing* an orange and an apple but it's extremely convenient in the marketplace.

Reducing all things to one common scale of value makes it much easier to trade them. But if you invent something to homogenize traded goods, it tends to homogenize everything. Suppose we meet an alien to this planet and teach him all about money—and nothing else. We tell him that oranges are worth twice as much as apples and give him enough money to have all he wants of both. On the basis of this information he would never taste an apple, unless he had some whimsical curiosity about what an inferior experience might be like. Money is not concerned with the unique qualities of experience.

•

Money is like a government agency—continually trying to enlarge its jurisdiction. Just as TV, which exists for the purpose of entertaining us, tends to con-

Philip Slater has taught sociology at Harvard and Brandeis. This article is excerpted from his new book, Wealth Addiction, *published by E.P. Dutton. Copyright © 1980 by Philip Slater.*

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vert everything into entertainment, even the news, so money, which exists to create a common standard of value, tends to reduce everything to that standard, even nature. More and more of us are having to pay for fresh air and a tolerable environment. We are even trained to believe that camping in the woods—"getting away from it all"—is possible only if we buy a lot of "it all" and take it with us in the form of expensive camping equipment. To breathe really clean air on land for more than a day at a time thus requires an initial investment of several hundred dollars, not counting the car that gets you back to nature in the first place and helps destroy it as you enjoy it.

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The early days of psychoanalysis saw some promising beginnings toward a psychology of money. Freud and his disciples talked about the preoccupation with money displayed by the "anal personality," one who was always hoarding and accumulating and tidying things up; rectal itching was discovered to be a common nervous symptom of the wealthy. But this interest in the neurotic side of wealth began to wane as the psychoanalysts themselves became wealthy, and in recent decades they have tended to concentrate more on the anality of poverty and untidiness.

•

One of the main reasons wealth makes people unhappy is that it gives them too much control over what they experience. They try to translate their own fantasies into reality instead of tasting what reality itself has to offer. This is usually an enervating and disappointing pastime. When you can control what comes to you in life, life itself loses most of its excitement. Almost nothing is unexpected since wealth tends to protect you from the unexpected. Your world gets filled up with the products of your own mind, and this deprives you of true novelty. A motel chain used to advertise that, in traveling, "the best surprise is no surprise." One wonders why people bother to leave home if they are trying to avoid surprises. For myself and other travelers I've talked with, the unexpected adventures, surprises, and crises of travel have produced the most wonderful experiences. They have also provided some painful ones, but if you don't allow for the possibility of pain, you cut off the possibility of pleasure. If you risk nothing, you get nothing. Yet whether in travel or in everyday life, wealth serves to eliminate adventure and challenge, smooth over rough spots, tame the unexpected, and bury novelty. The wealthy tend to respond to frustrations and adventures with intense irritability. The fact that their will is being thwarted is usually of more concern to them than the fact that a door is being opened.

•

The heart needs to find out if love can be won without any control or manipulation or power or money. The mind shuns this test and tries to load the dice on every throw. I become a success so that people will love me, but after I have become a success, can I believe in what I get? If you gain fame, power, or wealth, you won't have any trouble finding lovers—but they will be people who love fame, power, or wealth. If you go fishing with worms, you will catch whatever eats worms. But love isn't fishing. What we want most of all is to be loved for who we are, without bait. The more bait, the more doubt.

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Learning and growth are very difficult with wealth because they depend on experiences in real life, and wealth enables one to buy *out* of life. It provides the wherewithal to cling to every outworn fantasy, pathway, or goal—to grasp every outgrown security blanket more tightly—in such a way that you never need to change or develop.

If we stand willing to *lose* all of it, at any moment, then money will increase the options available to us, except insofar as the possession of the money distracts us from the innumerable options that don't involve money at all. The more money people get, the more prone to wealth addiction they are, because they begin to think increasingly of those pleasures money can buy and decreasingly of all others. This leads them to stockpile material goods—to buy more than they can use, which creates a vicious circle. As they become immersed in material possessions the janitorial services escalate. This shrinks the time available for pleasure, and in

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response to the growing shortage people stockpile *more* possessions so that they will be instantly available should the need arise. This creates more janitorial work. The closets of the affluent are filled with ski equipment, golf equipment, scuba gear, camping equipment, cameras, water skis, and so on, as well as books on how to do all these things. They have beautiful second homes, but when you pass by they aren't in them, or if they are, most often they're puttering about looking after the unending maintenance and equipment problems that such possessions demand.

•

Without money, how would you motivate people? If we take the word "people" to mean everybody (since "everybody wants money"), then the question can be rephrased like this: "Without money, how would we get ourselves to do the work we want done?"

But people are constantly doing work they want done without paying themselves for it. They work on their homes, they make things, they do volunteer work for the community. Scott Burns points out that if all the work Americans do "for nothing" were paid for at a minimum hourly wage, the total would be greater than the total of all wages and salaries paid out in the United States. Not only do Americans do more work without pay than they do *with* pay, but what they do is probably, on balance, better done, more useful, and less destructive than what they get paid for doing. The fact is that people build homes, make clothes, raise food, create beautiful things, explore nature, build bridges, care for those who are sick, old, crazy, and helpless, make community decisions, teach, heal, and defend each other without getting paid for it, and always have. We need to create structures that will reinforce this healthy core—to create a functional equivalent of greed. It would be helpful just to make people *aware* of this health—to make them realize that people will work for things other than money. For most people, working for money is merely habitual: they do it because this is the way it has always been. They scarcely notice how much work they do that *isn't* for pay. Our society makes them feel somehow that this work doesn't count. Only work done for money is considered "real work."

Medicine is the classic example of the distorting effect of money. While one function of a doctor is to save lives, studies have found that "the fewer the physicians in a population, the lower the mortality rate." Furthermore, "during the physician strikes in Canada, the United States, England, and Israel, the death rate actually fell." Commenting on one such strike in Los Angeles, a columnist suggested that the sharp decrease in the death rate was due to the marked reduction in surgical operations. A congressional subcommittee estimated that in the year 1974 alone, 2.4 *million* unnecessary surgeries were performed, at a cost of $1 *billion* and leading to 11,900 deaths. Radical mastectomies, routine in this country for breast cancer, "have no higher cure rate than the 'lumpectomies' that are routine in England." A surgeon, asked why he nevertheless performed them, replied: "A radical mastectomy goes for $750. A simple mastectomy for $250. Which do you think we're going to say is best?"

Americans believe that dangling money in front of people makes them work harder and become more efficient. It is true that some people will work harder for a monetary reward. The catch is that they aren't working to perform the task; *they're working to get the money and will distort their performance in any way possible* to get it. The lure of money may have made the surgeon quoted above willing and able to perform more and more mastectomies and to get good at it, and from an extremely narrow and shortsighted viewpoint this could be considered "efficiency." But if health is the goal, the money approach is not only "inefficient," it's a total failure. Nor is this an isolated or unusual example.

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People like to do what they do with some degree of skill. They want to get good at it. This may involve a certain degree of passion and commitment hard to discriminate from addictive ambition. We can distinguish between them by looking at the goal: is the energy invested in the activity because it's an end in itself or a means to an end? Do I do it because I love doing it well and have an image in my mind of what it would feel like to do it even better? Or do I do it because I have an image of the money I'll make or the recognition and applause I'll receive? If my

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fantasies revolve around being a star or getting rich, then the activity is merely in the service of addiction.

Most people, of course, have to struggle just to survive. They work because they have to, and their labors are relieved neither by satisfaction with what they do nor with images of future success. They don't enjoy the luxury of choosing between work that is inherently satisfying and work that is just a means to an end. But even middle-class people who have such choices often feel as if they were compelled from outside.

Like all addictions, wealth addiction is self-reinforcing. It creates habits of mind and habits of behavior that keep us from seeing the way out. By emphasizing our dependence on externals, for example, it weakens our self-respect. We lose the feeling that we could survive or care for ourselves without the trappings of civilization—we feel incompetent, helpless, and then have to use money and status to prop ourselves up. Furthermore, by locking us into ownership, distracting us and keeping us busy with janitorial services for our possessions, wealth addiction makes it harder and harder for us to see our lives in perspective—see that we actually *have* choices. Possessions multiply: each one requires accessories for maintenance, enhancement, protection, and so on, so that each purchase traps us into further ones. We begin to see our lives as a matter of necessity and compulsion rather than choice—we feel we have to work and scramble just to "keep up" (sometimes literally in the form of credit payments). And finally, wealth addiction, with its competitiveness, its concern with surfaces—with appearance, status, prestige—produces a less open, more masked life, which in turn fosters loneliness and suspicion.

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J. Paul Getty bought his first stock at the age of eleven—100 shares of his father's oil company at $5 a share. His diary at that age shows a boy already obsessed with money and accumulation:

"Papa home—a quarter for my purse"; "Papa gave me 10 cents to go to the Post Office with a letter"; "Twenty cents for an errand"; "I now have about 275 marbles"; "Counted my stamp collection—305"; "another 55¢"; "Sold 12 copies of S.E.P."; "Papa gave me a dollar. Whee!"

What makes these entries particularly pathetic is that they are not those of a poor boy but of a rich one, and are relieved by so little else. In the 18 months during which this diary was kept, there is only one reference to a playmate, and his strongest memory of an adolescent trip to Europe was the prices.

•

Never own what you rarely use. We like to fill our dwellings with objects that "might come in handy," equipment for events that occur a few times a year, clothes for "special occasions." New products are invented literally every day, most of them absurdly specific. But what harm is there in being thus prepared for every conceivable eventuality? It may make for a lot of clutter but what difference does that make if people like living that way?

The problem is that the choice is not always a free one. There are few people who can surround themselves with material possessions and not be bound by them. Having chosen repeatedly to prepare yourself against all future contingencies, it isn't too likely that you'll be able to walk away from your possessions or treat them lightly. Your life becomes tied to matter—a wall of possessions barricades you against the kinds of experiences that challenge you, change you, and lift your spirits. You have all these possessions to avoid being caught short, to avoid hassle and discomfort. Yet the process of avoiding some hypothetical *future* discomfort ties you to a chronic nagging level of real *present* discomfort.

What would happen if you were caught not owning something when you wanted to use it? You could buy it then, or borrow it, or rent it, or do without it. In any case the trouble would be confined to the day it arose instead of pervading every day of your life. It might even provide you with an interesting experience.

Most of the "joys of ownership" turn out to be a tiresome bother. Hugh Hefner, for example, whose passion for possessions has managed to make even sex boring, owns his own DC-9. One of his associates points out that because of this "convenience" Hefner can't just hop on a plane and go where he feels like going. He has to plan every trip several days in advance—arrange for pilots, food, flight schedules. To be an owner is to be a servant. ■

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political book notes

Andrew Johnson and the Uses of Constitutional Power. *James E. Sefton. Little, Brown, $9.95.*

Bones of Contention: An Enquiry into East-West Relations. *Terence Garvey. St. Martin's, $12.95.*

Britain's Oil. *Guy Arnold. Hamish Hamilton, $25.*

The Dream of the Golden Mountains: Remembering the 1930s. *Malcolm Cowley. Viking, $14.95.*

Economic Sanity or Collapse. *Gerald R. Zoffer. McGraw-Hill, $12.95.*

The Energy Book. *Wayne Hanley, John Mitchell, eds. Stephen Greene Press, $11.95.* If you feel cheated that the energy crisis has yet to destroy Western civilization, this is the book for you. It's a collection of nostalgic essays about how much better off we were before cheap energy, and why we should look forward to the day when it runs out. Welcome to freeze-in-the-dark chic.

Remember the good old days of manual labor, when broken backs were common, when travel was a grueling risk, when every cold spell took with it the weak and elderly? *The Energy Book* does. One essay, for instance, describes the tranquil harmony of the early years of gasoline, when you got the stuff from a seldom-used spigot in front of the general store, and some eager high school lad had to crank it up by hand because there were no electric pumps.

The Energy Book's authors are scholars and scientists of impressive credentials, and yet they fall for the popular notion that love of oil is the root of all evil. But oil is great stuff—cheap, easy to process and use, clean-burning. The only thing wrong with oil is that we can't get enough of it anymore.

Getting off the oil standard may sound wonderful, but it forces us into a much more delicate re-location of the elements. We must pump more and more sulpher into the air—more of a suffocating gas Nature long ago determined was best bound to coal and buried. Sulpher will do us far more damage than the by-products of oil combustion ever did. This should not prevent us from using coal, or anything else that serves our purposes. But it shouldn't make us giddy with anticipation.

Any benign power like solar energy, and any voluntary reductions in the use of energy—the dipole policy advocated by *The Energy Book*—will serve us well. Lightening the load is a helpful step. In so doing, however, our vision should not stop at the day they electrified the gas pumps. Society *needs* a crackling current of high-voltage energy and, for the next decades, must burn fossil fuels to get it. *The Energy Book* leaves the lingering impression that, if God had wanted us to use oil, He would have left it lying around in pools. Well, if God had wanted us to have sex, we would have all been born naked.

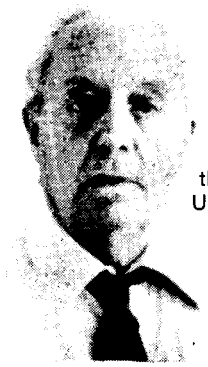
—Gregg Easterbrook

Sweden

The Middle Way on Trial

Marquis W. Childs

Marquis Childs, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of the now-classic *Sweden: The Middle Way,* takes another look at Sweden—forty years later—to see how well the "middle way" is faring. The Swedes, he finds, are grappling now with new problems, and the choices that must be made—about the costs of social welfare, about the distribution of wealth, and about developing nuclear power—are the choices that face the United States and other postindustrial states as well. Illus. $12.95



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The Fate of the Dollar. *Martin Mayer. Times, $15.*

The Full Employment Alternative. *Andrew Levison. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $9.95.*

Government Requirements of Small Business. *Roland J. Cole, Philip D. Tegeler. Lexington, $17.95.*

Inflation, Interest, and Growth. *Hans Brems. Lexington, $17.95.*

The Jury: Its Role in American Society. *Rita J. Simon. Lexington, $18.95.*

The Last Bull Market: Wall Street in the 1960s. *Robert Sobel. Norton, $12.95.*

Life After '80: Environmental Choices We Can Live With. *Kathleen Courrier, ed. Brick House, $6.95.*

The Mind of Watergate: A Study of the Compromise of Integrity. *Leo Rangell, M.D. Norton, $12.95.*

Money in Congressional Elections. *Gary C. Jacobson. Yale, $15.* Here it is, your worst suspicion about campaigning confirmed—the most important factor in beating an incumbent congressman, Jacobson says, is raising money. Oh, looks, charm, issues, maybe a splash of integrity helps, but most of your clout comes from the purse.

Using statistical analyses of the last four congressional elections, Jacobson shows how much easier it is for incumbents to raise campaign chests. That much is no surprise. Then he goes on to demonstrate that poorly funded challengers, whatever their merits, almost never win. The occasional poorly funded incumbent can prevail, but it seldom works the other way, Jacobson says, and his argument is convincing.

Nuclear Lessons: An Examination of the Health, Safety and Economic Record of Nuclear Power. *Richard Curtis, Elizabeth Hogan, with Sheldon Horowitz. Stackpole, $16.95.*

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The Political Puzzle will return next month.

The Pillars of the Post: The Making of a News Empire. *Howard Bray. Norton, $11.95.*

Regulating the Professions. *Roger D. Blair, Stephen Rubin, eds. Lexington, $27.95.*

The Role of Medicine: Dream, Mirage, or Nemesis? *Thomas McKeown. Princeton, $16.*

Shrinking Dollars, Vanishing Jobs. *Dick Cluster, Nancy Rutter, and the Staff of Dollars & Sense Magazine. Beacon, $12.95/$5.95.*

The State of the Presidency. *Thomas E. Cronin. Little, Brown, $14.95.* Another scholarly book on an over-documented subject—but, surprise, it's one you can read without coming away looking like an extra from *Dawn of the Dead.* It's clear and crisp, and will not bore you—qualities so rare in writing about the presidency that they alone make the book praiseworthy.

Cronin does priceless little things for the reader, like breaking up the book into 1,000-word increments set off by clever subheads. Helping the reader along is scoffed at as a sign of weakness in academic writing, because it acknowledges the temporal realm in which the doorbell rings, the mind wanders, and sometimes you get up and get a beer. This will probably cost Cronin points among his colleagues, but makes readers thankful.

Cronin breaks the central questions of the presidency up into its paradoxes: "The Common Man Who Gives an Uncommon Performance," "The Longer He is There The Less We Like Him." His book seems to strive after nailing down the central paradox: that every president is "always too powerful and yet always inadequate." I don't think he precisely hits the explanation—which is, I believe, that presidents have very little power but spend so much time trying to seem as if they do that they generate all the negative emotions of power-wielding—but that's just taste. And he didn't have to complete the catalog by giving us self-evident paradoxes like "Active in Some Areas at Some Times but Passive in Other Areas at Other Times."

—*G. E.*

Taking the Fifth: The Supreme Court and the Privilege Against Self-Incrimination. *Mark Berger. Lexington, $23.95.*

The Third Wave. *Alvin Toffler. Morrow, $12.95.*

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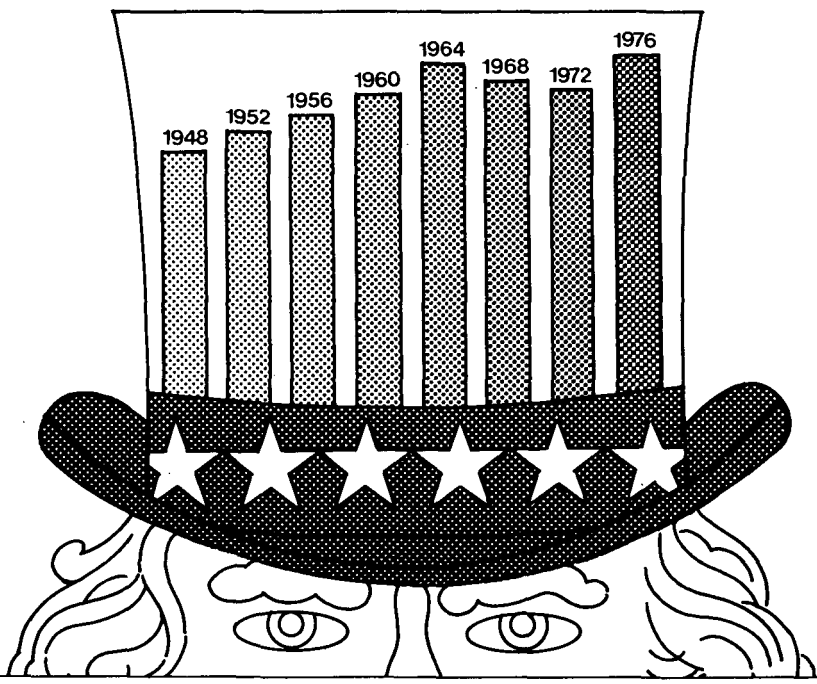

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